

Humane Life :

O R, A

1489 ff. 26

SECOND PART

OF THE

ENQUIRY

A F T E R

HAPPINESS.

---

By the A U T H O R of  
*Practical Christianity.*

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L O N D O N,

Printed for George Pawlet at the Bible in  
*Chancery-Lane*, and Samuel Smith at  
the *Prince's Arms* in *St. Paul's*  
Church-yard. 1690.

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July 5.  
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*Z. Isham* R.P.D.  
*Henrico* Episc.  
*Lond.* à Sacris.

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TERRITORY



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HUMAN E LIFE:  
 OR, A  
 SECOND PART  
 OF THE  
 Enquiry after Happiness.

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INTRODUCTION.

**I** Am not ignorant, that Dedications and Prefaces, if they have in them a genius of Eloquence, if they sparkle with Wit and Fancy; if they be enriched with Sense, and animated by moving and vital Language, are like graceful Accesses, and beautiful Fronts to Buildings; which while they raise in the Beholder a secret Delight, do prepossess him with favourable Opinions of them: But this being only a Continuation of a former Treatise, and having little Encouragement either from my Humor or Talents to any attempt of that kind, I never suffer myself to be unnecessarily engaged in it, I will therefore in this place only give a short Account of what I have performed in the first Volume, and design in this: In the first Chapter I shewed that Happiness was neither so great and divine a possession as to be above the Ambition of Man, nor so inconsiderable, as not to deserve it: And next that it was not to be expected

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from

*from Time or Chance, Fancy or Inclination; but from Reason and Industry, Vertue and Religion. In the second, having first briefly stated the Notion of Happiness, I endeavoured to demonstrate the possibility of obtaining it, and to rescue so important an Opinion from the Prejudices and Objections that might stifle and oppress it. In the third, I just pointed out the Causes of humane misery, or of unsuccessfulness in this Enquiry, and the Remedies of it.*

*Having thus removed whatever might discourage or frustrate our Endeavours after Happiness, I am now to proceed to a more strict and particular Examination of the Nature of it, and the Ways and Methods that lead to it. In which I am obliged, according to the General Design or Scheme laid down in the former Volume, to treat of Life, Perfection, Indolence, and Fruition, accordingly I here begin with Life, and dividing this Book into three Sections. I will in the first, discourse of the true Notion of Humane Life. In the second, of the right Conduct or Regulation of the two different kinds of Life, Active and Contemplative. In the third, of the right husbanding Humane Life, by prolonging and improving it.*

## S E C T. I.

*Of the True Notion of Life.*

## C H A P. I.

*Life a great Blessing in it self. Proves  
a great Evil to some. And why?  
Happineß perfect only in Heaven.*

**T**HÔ Life render us capable of Pain as well as Pleasure, yet has it ever been valued as the richest Blessing, the Love of it is the earliest and the strongest Principle in us, it moves the Infant before he knows how to rate the Pleasures of Life, or can apprehend any Evil in Death; it grows up to strength and maturity in Man, and is the Sovereign Passion in him, to which all the rest pay homage; *Skin for skin, and all that a man has will he give for his Life*: Age does very little diminish it, and Misery it self cannot extinguish it. Nor does this Passion want the suffrage of the wisest and the greatest men, or the approba-

tion of God ; for one chief design of Society and Government, of Laws and Arms, is the protection of Life ; and God, who best understood the bent of Humane Nature, has proposed as the biggest Blessing and powerfullest Motive to Obedience, a long Life (I examine not now what it farther prefigured) under the Old Testament, and an eternal one under the New. And for all this there is plain reason, for Life, if it be not, when rightly understood, Happiness it self, yet is it surely the Foundation of it, and the Foundation in a Building, if it be not as beautiful as upper Stories, yet is it ever as necessary. I wonder not therefore that the Sentence of Death shook the Piety of *Hezekiah*, and the Courage of *Saul*, so that the one *wept sore*, and the other *fell to the ground*.

But to all this will it not be objected ? Alas ! How many are there, who all their days are no more sensible of the good of Life, than of the Pleasures and Repasts of a Dream, who being come to Threescore years and ten, that is to dye, do not yet understand what it is to live ; ah ! how many ? which is yet worse,

worse, to whom Life is a burden, and yet Death a terror; who when they are to give back the Breath of Life, have just reason to wish they had never received it; and to curse the day that they were born. And do not *Elijah, Job, Solomon, Jeremy, Esdras*, and many others, great and good men, talk of Life at a different rate from what I here do, and represent it to us under another Notion, and quite contrary Character? *Better is the day of death than the day of ones birth. Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night wherein it was said there is a man-child conceived.* The Reflection of *Esdras* on the common misery of Mankind, has as much weight and sense, as *Job's* on his own, has passion; *For what profit is it for men now in this present time to live in heaviness, and after death to look for punishment?* These and such like Passages we meet with every where, which seem to give us no very taking Idea of Life. To all this I answer, 'Tis with Life as with all other Blessings, the right use of it is our happiness; the abuse of it our misery. There is nothing in the nature of the thing that implies evil or



trouble : nor has it any necessary and inevitable tendency to it. We must not therefore estimate a Blessing by the mischief it occasions such as pervert and abuse it; nor by the Complaints which Humane Frailty sometimes forces from wise and good men in a melancholy fit, or finally by the Reflections they sometimes make, not on the intrinsic worth, or natural tendency of Life, but on the Evils which flow from the Corruption or Deprivation of it. 'Tis true, when all is said, Heaven is the proper Region of Happiness; there it dwells in its glory and majesty, in all its fulness and excellence; but what then, because Perfection does properly belong to Heaven, is there no Vertue upon Earth? because all things are in their maturity and consummation there, shall we deny that there is any sweetness or beauty here: Just so must we think of the happiness of this, in comparison of that of another world; it is here in its Infancy, we do slumber, and are scarcely ever fully awake; we see little, penetrate and comprehend less; and we move very feebly and unsteadily; but all this while we grow up to  
strength,



strength, we advance towards perfection, our Joynts grow firmer, our Stature increaseth, our Understanding dawns towards day, and our Affections are gradually animated with a more generous and lasting heat; so that all this while this infant state of Happiness is pleasant and promising, and every step in the whole progress towards Perfection, presents us with fresh Beauties and Delights; but I know no body so fantastick, as to despise the present Life because it is not equal to that above; and he that thinks there is none above, sets the more value on this, because he has nothing more or further to expect. I will not therefore spend any more time in endeavouring to prove Life a valuable Blessing, but rather proceed to show how every man may really make it such to himself, which I think I cannot more compendiously do, than by stating the true Notion of Humane Life; for as our Misery flows from the abuse, and our Happiness from the right use of Life, so does the abuse from false, and the right use from true Notions of it.

## C H A P. II.

*Life, what in a natural sense. What in a moral. Life, Perfection, and Enjoyment, inseparably united. More particularly, Life consists not in Sloth, Sensuality, Worldlineß, Devilishneß, but in the Regulation of all our Actions according to right Reason.*

**L** I F E may be considered either in a Natural or Moral Sense; in the former acceptation, what it is, is an Enquiry very abstruse and intricate, like the Egyptian *Nile*, tho its Streams be visible to every Eye, its Source or Fountain is concealed; or like Grace, tho we feel its Energy, and taste its Fruits, yet we cannot discover, and define its Essence; but to carry our discovery thus far, is accuracy enough in Moral Discourses, whose end is not Speculation, but Happiness.

Life then, whatever it be in the Fountain and Essence, as far as we can discern it, is nothing else but that force and vigour which moves and acts the Man; and to live, speaking in a natural sense,  
is

is to exert the Powers and Faculties of Nature ; according to which account of Life, 'tis capable of as many Notions as are the different Offices it performs ; 'tis Sense and Motion in the Body, 'tis Perception and Fancy in the Imagination, 'tis Knowledge in the Understanding, and Love and Hate, with all their Train or Retinue of Passions in the Heart or Soul.

Now because all Morality consists in the right use of those Blessings which our great and bountiful Author confers upon us, therefore in a moral sense, the true Life of Man is nothing else, but the right use of our whole Nature, an active employing it in its due Functions and Offices, a vigorous Exercise of all our Powers and Faculties, in a manner suitable to the Dignity and Design, to the Frame and Constitution of our Beings : To live then in a moral sense, is to know and contemplate, to love and pursue that which is the true Good of Man, this is the Life of the Understanding, Will, Affections, and of the whole Man ; and whatever acts of ours are not some way or other conversant about Truth and Goodness, are not properly

perly Acts of Humane Life, but Deviations from it.

And here I cannot chuse but pause a little, to admire and magnifie the infinite Wisdom and Goodness of the Almighty Architect, who has contrived an inseparable Connection and necessary Dependance between Life, Perfection, and Fruition, every rational Act, every right Use or Exertion of our Natural Powers and Faculties, as it is of the Essence of Moral Life; so does it contribute to the Improvement and Perfection of our Beings, and to the Pleasure and Felicity of our state; for Perfection is the Result of such repeated Acts and Pleasure of our entertaining our selves with proper and agreeable Objects. Happy man! to whom, to live, improve, and enjoy is the same thing; who cannot defeat God's Goodness and his own Happiness, but by perverting his Nature, and depraving his Faculties, but by making an ill use, or none at all, of the Favours and Bounties of God.

If we examine this Notion of Life more closely, and distinctly, and resolve this general Account of it, into several  
Par-

Particulars, we shall easily arrive at a fuller and clearer Comprehension of it.

*First*, 'Tis evident from this Account of Life, that it does not consist in *Sloth*, in the meer marriage or cohabitation of Soul and Body; in meer Duration or Continuance in this World. *Solomon* indeed, out of a natural Abhorrence of Death, tells us, *Truly Light is sweet and a pleasant thing it is to behold the Sun*, Eccl. 2. 7. Something it is, if we must call it pleasure, 'tis but a faint and low one, such as all the Irrational Creatures; but Bats, and Owls, and Moles are capable of, but, according to my Philosophy, it can never deserve the Name of Life: He that possesses Vital Powers and Faculties, is in a Capacity of Life, but he only that exerts them Lives. To live is not to spend or waste our time, but to imploy it: 'Tis a lamentable History of Life, when it can all be summed up in the few Syllables of a Funeral Ring; he lived to, or rather as it is wont to be expressed, he died such a day of the Month, such a year of his Age; for indeed he lived not at all; Life is a meer Dream; not  
only



only on the account of its shortness, but also of its Night and Lethargy, when stupid Ignorance confines and dims the Prospect, and Sluggishness enfeebles all the powers of the Mind, Vigour and Activity, Fruition and Enjoyment, make up Life; without these Life is but an imperfect Embryo, a mingled twilight that never will be Day; the Images, the slothful form of things are faint and obscure, like Pictures drawn in watery Colours, and weak and imperfect strokes, and vanish as easie as those half Sounds and imperfect Forms which we take in between sleep and waking; all their Passions move drowsily and heavily, and all their Entertainments have no more relish than abortive Fruit, which can never be ripened into Sweetness or Beauty. When I have observed any one thus wasting away a whole Life, without ever being once well awake in it, passing through the World like a heedless Traveller, without making any Reflections or Observations, without any Design or Purpose befitting a Man; ah! thought I, is this that Creature for which this great Theater the World was made? for which it was so adorned



ed and so enriched ? Is this the Creature that is the Epitome of the World ? the top and glory of the visible Creation, a little inferior to Angels, and allied to God ; Is this Machine acted by a moving Flame, and by a wise and immortal Spirit ? Ah ! how much is this poor useless stupid thing sunk beneath the Dignity and Design of its Nature ? How far short is it fallen of the Glory to which God had destined it ? Shall this contemplative thing ever be admitted to Eternal Life, who has so wretchedly fooled away this Temporal one ? Or can Crowns and Kingdoms be reserved for one who has been so ill a Steward of all these Talents God has committed to him ? No surely , I could upon the first thought, imagine his sluggish Soul would vanish like those of Brutes , or as the Stoicks fancy, those of Fools ; I could easily imagine that it could sleep, not as some fancy all Souls do to the Resurrection, but to all Eternity. But upon better consideration , I find this ignorant and incogitant Life, is not so innocent as to deserve no worse a Fate ; For is it a small Crime to live barren and unfruitful, endowed with so many Talents ?

Talents? to frustrate the design of our Creation, to choak and stifle all the Seeds of a Divine Life, and Perfection, to quench the Grace and Spirit of God. In a word, is it a small Crime to be false and perfidious to God, unjust and injurious to Man? No, it cannot be; and therefore in the parable of our Saviour, wherein the last Audit or Day of Accompts is represented, the slothful and wicked Servant signifie one and the same thing, and must undergo one and the same Sentence.

*Secondly*, Life cannot consist in Sensuality, that is, in the meer caressing our Senses, or the gratification of our Carnal Appetites. The Reasons of this Assertion are evident from the general Notion of Life. For first, This is not the Exercise of the whole Nature, but a part of it, and that the inferiour and ignobler too. Secondly, It is not an Employment suitable to the Dignity of our Nature.

First, Sensuality imployes only the meaner part of us; *St. Paul* makes mention of the outward and the inward man, and seems to make up the whole man of Spirit, Soul; and Body; and some

some both Divines and Philosophers of no small note, both Modern and Ancient, have taught that there are two distinct Souls in man, a Sensitive and a Rational one; if this be so, the Sensualist, tho' he seem fond of Life, does foolishly condemn the better half of it; and as much a Slave to Pleasure as he is, he chuses to drink only the Dregs, and lets the pure Streams of sprightly and delicious Life pass by untasted; for if there be a Sensitive and Rational Soul, there must be a Sensitive and a Rational Life too, distinct and different from one another, and one as much elevated above the other, as are the Principles they flow from. But whether this be so or no, does not import much; for it is plain that Life, whatever it be, is like Seed, which according to the different Soyl it is sown in, produces Fruit more or less rich and succulent, more or less luscious and beautiful; here it sprouts forth like the seven poor and lean, there like the seven plump and rich Ears of Corn in *Pharaoh's Dream*; and should it by way of fiction be supposed, that one and the same Soul did communicate Life to Men, Beasts, and  
Vege-

Vegetables ; however, Life in each would be equal in the dignity of its Original, it would vastly differ in its Effects and Operations ; so whether Life in Man flow from one or two distinct Principles, it is evident that its Price and Dignity varies according to the different Powers and Faculties which it moves and animates, and by consequence that Life which displays it self in the acts of our Rational Part, will be as different from that which consists in Sensation, and the Motions of Bodily Appetites, as is the Light that glitters in a Diamond from that which faintly imitates it in a Pebble ; the more numerous and the more exquisite our Faculties, the vaster is the Empire of Life, and the more delicate and charming all its Functions and Operations : How evident is this in all the Organs and Senses of the Body ? Let Darkness invade the Eye , and Deafness the Ear, and then within what narrow and scanty Bounds is the bodily Life reduced ? How few and ignoble are the Vital Acts and Operations of the Body ? How vile and contemptible are all the Fruits or Instances of a sensitive Life ? If then  
there

there be no Sense or Organ of the Body superfluous, can we think the rational Soul it self can be so ? If there be no Power, no Capacity of a sensitive Soul, by which Life is not enlarged or enriched, must we not needs conclude, That to extinguish the Immortal Spirit within us, and as it were, to discard all its Powers and Faculties, must needs be to impoverish, mutilate, and stifle it ; since I have a Soul as well as Body, since the one is as capable of conversing with God and Heaven, with Truth and Moral Goodness and Perfection, as the other is of conversing with this World of visible Objects, I cannot but conclude, That to be destitute of Knowledge, and Faith, of Hope and Love, is more injurious to the true Life of Man, than to be Deaf or Blind ; that Stupidity or Lethargy in the Soul, such as renders it altogether incapable of rational Pleasure, is as inconsistent with the true Life of Man, as Lethargy or a dead Palsie in the Body can be ; and to be excluded from Commerce with the invisible World, is as fatal to it, as to be debarred the visible one. From all this 'tis evident, that whether we

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consider Life with respect to its Excellence and Dignity, or to its Enlargement and Extension, Sensuality is extremely injurious to it in both respects, so far doth it debase and contract it, that I may boldly conclude, to place Life in Sensuality, is to renounce the much more valuable and delightful part of it, to banish our selves the much better World, and to rob our selves of a thousand Joys and Pleasures which we might reap from the rational Powers and Faculties, that is, the noblest Capacities and Endowments of our Nature. Tho' this be abundantly enough to evince, that Life consists not in Sensuality, yet this being of the highest Importance to Humane Happiness, I will proceed to the second Argument against it, that is,

Secondly, It is not consonant to the Dignity of Humane Nature, or which is all one, to the Design of our Beings, conspicuous in our Frame and Constitution, who, that ever considered what Sensuality was, how narrow the extent of Sense, how mean and brutish the Pleasure that terminates in it; what a Corruption and Degeneracy it ends in;  
Who?



Who ? I say, that has ever considered these, and a thousand things more, can believe that Sensuality is an Employment worthy of Man ? Is this the Business of a vast and comprehensive mind ? Is this consistent with ambitious Desires of Immortality, with unquenchable Thirst of Truth, with a Capacity of discovering Spiritual Excellencies and Moral Beauties and Perfections ? Was it for this we were endowed with Propensions to worship and adore a Deity ? What can be as much as fancied the use of Wisdom, Magnanimity, Conscience, Sagacity, Caution, Fear, Foresight and anxious Enquiries into future Things and Times, if Sensuality had been the only Employment designed Man ; how much more fit had we been formed for this end, if there had been in us no Reason to check and controul us, no Conscience that could fill us with regret for the past, or fear for the Future ; no Wisdom that could teach us that there were any thing above us, nor greatness of mind that could reproach us for stooping to any thing below us.

*Thirdly,* 'Tis almost superfluous here to add, That Life consists not in *World-*

*linefs* or *Devilishnefs* ; as to the former of these, by which I mean the Cares and Pursuits of the World, 'tis plain , that to employ our Time or Faculties in this alone, is not to Live, but at best to provide for Life : Necessity may sometimes subject us to the drudgery and slavery of the World , but a voluntary Choice never should. I know no other difference between a mean Fortune and a great one, than this, that the great one sets a Man above those Cares and Toils, which the mean one forces him to submit to ; that the one puts the fortunate Man into the immediate possession of all the Means and Instruments of Life , Improvement and Fruition, and of Leasure and Opportunity to make use of them ; but the latter obliges the less fortunate Man to purchase these Advantages with Toil and Sweat, Sollicitude and Care ; 'tis therefore an unpardonable wilfulness or blindness, whenever that Vassalage, which is the Infelicity of the mean Man, is the choice of the rich and fortunate one : Nor is it a more pardonable Error in any who continue the drudgey and care when the necessity is over, and voluntarily

rily suffer all the disadvantages of a narrow Fortune, even when they have attained to a plentiful one, who never think it time to begin to Live, or to enjoy the Success of their Cares and Diligence, this is an Absurdity as gross as his, who after he has plowed and sowed, should refuse to reap; or his, who having, with much cost and labour, furnished out a plentiful Table, should not at length find in his heart to fall too and eat.

Life then consists not in the abundance of the things which a man possesses, much less in the vexation or toil of acquiring, securing, or increasing them, which is that I intend by *Worldliness*; but least of all can Life consist in *Devilishness*, that is, Wrath, Strife, Revenge, Pride, and such like; this cannot be called the Vigour and Activity, but Storm and Agony of our Nature; this is a state wherein the Understanding is covered with a Darkness of Hell, that is, Ignorance of Good and Evil; and the Passions are but Furies unchained, and let loose.

*Fourthly*, Having thus, by resolving particularly concerning Life, that it consists

fits not either in Sloth or Sensuality, *Worldliness* or *Devilishness*, pointed out those fatal Errors which mislead and seduce Men from the Paths of Peace and Happiness ; 'tis now time to shew in the last place, what it is, wherein Life does more immediately and particularly consist, that is, in a vigorous and active Employment of the whole Man, according to the Rules and Dictates of right Reason: When I make Reason the Director and Guide of Humane Life, when I constitute it Dictator over all the Powers and Passions of Man, I do no more mean to exclude the Aid of Revelation, and the Spirit of God, than when I affirm the Eye to be the Guide of the Body, I intend to deny the necessity of Light to good Eyes, or of Spectacles and Collyriums to dim or disturbed ones: The Proposition thus guarded, will appear indisputable to any who shall consider the frame and make of Man, that we are rational Creatures, is a Truth never hitherto controverted; and that Reason is the Sovereign Faculty in us, appears from the Universal Appeal of all Sides and all Sects to its Tribunal. Not the ver-  
tuous

tuous and wise only, but the loose and the vicious plead the Authority of Reason, in defence of their Choice and Actions ; and in all the numberless Disputes that are in the World, tho' only one side can have the warrant and countenance of Reason, yet all do pretend to it ; so that tho' there be no Power or Authority which in reality be more frequently opposed and violated, there is also none which is more unanimously owned, and universally acknowledged : As therefore it is plain, from what has been discoursed before, That Life consists not in vital Powers and Faculties, but in the Exercise and Employment of them ; so is it as plain, that in this we are not to follow the Conduct of Fancy and Imagination, of Lust and Passion, but of Reason : This is the right use of our Natural Gifts, which distinguishes Man from Beasts, and Men from one another ; the Hero from the Caitiff and Villain, the Philosopher from the Fool, and the Saint from the Sinner : In this consists the Order and Dignity of Humane Nature, in this the Beauty and Tranquility of Humane Life ; and in this the inward Joy and Peace of the



Mind of Man. This will be yet more manifest to whosoever will take the pains to enquire what the Office of Reason is; 'tis this which teaches us what rank we hold among the Creatures of God, what station we fill in the World, what our Relations and Dependencies are, what the Duty and what the Hopes, what the Benefit and what the Pleasure that result from each: 'Tis this which prescribes all our Powers and Passions, their Order, Place, and Work; 'Tis this which distinguishes Truth and Falshood, Good and Evil; 'Tis this which fills us with the Knowledge, and enflames us with the Love of our Sovereign Happiness, and Judges of the Means and Ways that lead to it; and finally, 'tis this which teaches us to set a true rate and value upon all inferiour things, in proportion to their tendency, either to promote or obstruct our Sovereign Good: Happy therefore is that Life where Reason is the Sovereign Arbitrator of all our Actions, and where the Imagination and Passions, all the Powers of the Soul, are yet Servants and Instruments of Reason: Happy this Life, for it can neither want Pleasure  
to

to entertain it, nor Business to imploy it; happy the Soul which thus lives, for it shall never want Comfort to support it, Hopes to encourage it, nor Crowns to reward it; for as it grows in Wisdom and Goodness, so must it in Favour with God and Man; and its Peace and Tranquility, its Joys and Expectations must receive a proportionable Increase too.

C H A P. III.

*Inferences drawn from the former Chapter. First, To cultivate our Reason. The Use of which is more particularly insisted on with respect to three things, that is, the imploying our Faculties, the bearing Evil, and enjoying Good. Secondly, To renounce every thing that opposes it as Fancy, Passion, Example, Custom. Thirdly, That 'tis possible to be happy in every state. Fourthly, That a long Life is a great Blessing, considered either in it self, or with respect to the Life to come.*

FROM the Notion of Life thus stated, 'tis evident, *First*, That our Business is to Cultivate and Improve Reason,

Reason, for this, as you have seen, is to be the Guide and Superintendent of all our Powers and Faculties, and the Arbitrer and Judge of all our Actions; *If the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness*, Matth. 6. 23. Vigour and Activity, if Reason do not steer them, will but prove mischievous and fatal to us; Diligence and Industry themselves will only serve to corrupt our Nature, and embroyl our Life, every deviation from Reason is a deviation from our true Perfection and Happiness; the Fool and the Sinner do in the Language of the Scripture signifie the same thing, and so do Sin and Misery. This is the true Original of all those Mischiefs which infest the World, the neglect or contempt of right Reason; 'Tis this which makes our Complaints so numerous, and so bitter; 'Tis this that makes us so weak and soft in Adversity, so restless and little satisfied even in Prosperity it self; 'Tis this creates all those Disasters and Disappointments which make us often quarrel at Providence, and curse our Fortune; *The folly of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against God,*

God, Prov. 19. 3. Well therefore did the Wiseman advise, Prov. 4. 7. *Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get Wisdom, and withal thy getting, get Understanding.* The Necessity of this does easily appear from the slightest Reflection upon the Work or Office of Reason, of which I have given a brief and general Account before, much more from the use of it, in three great Points; The Employing our Faculties, the Enjoyment of Good, and the Bearing Evil.

*First*, The Employing, &c. the Soul of Man like a fertile Field, seems alike apt to produce either Herbs or Weeds; the Faculties of it are capable of being the Instruments of the greatest Evil or the greatest Good; the greatest Good, if regulated and conducted by Reason; the greatest Evil, if blindly and rashly led by any other Principle. What is the Imagination of a Fool, but a Shop of Toys and Trinkets, not the Laboratory of a Philosopher, where a thousand vain trifling and empty Ideas flutter confusedly up and down? What his Memory, but a Receptacle and Sink of Sins and Follies, of mean and shameful Things

Things and Actions, not a Treasury of excellent Truths, laid up like Ammunition and Provision for time both of Peace and War? What his Heart, but the Rendezvous of a thousand mutinous violent and dishonourable Lusts which rend and tear him, worse than the Devil in the Gospel the Man possessed? Nay, what is even Fancy and Wit it self, if destitute of sound Judgment and true Reason, but I know not what sort of flashes, which dazle but do not guide, serve for amuzement rather than nourishment or delight, and therefore the Author is very well paid, if he be praised and starved, which is generally his Fate. In a word, neither Business nor Diversion can have in them any thing truly useful or truly pleasing, if they be not regulated and conducted by right Reason, and all the Dispositions and Faculties of our Nature will be, but either lost upon Fooleries, or abused to our Ruin.

Secondly, The use of Reason is conspicuous in the fruition of Good. Knowledge is like Light shed upon the Face of the World, which discovers all its various Beauties and wondrous Wealth,  
which



which while Darkness covered them , were as thô they had not been ; without Reason we shall not be able to discern nor value our own Happiness , nor be sensible of our Blessings and Goods, even thô they croud and throng upon us ; without this our very Enjoyments will prove fatal to our Repose, and we shall meet Gall and Wormwood in the bottom of our Draughts of Pleasure : *For the turning away of the Simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of Fools shall destroy them, Prov. 1. 32.* It requires no small Philosophy, either to render Business pleasant, or Pleasure innocent, either to discharge those Duties which a great Birth or eminent Station call men to , or to employ that time which an ample Fortune makes them entirely Masters of. And to husband a Life of Ease and Enjoyment to the best, and fill it with Vertue and Honour ; ah ! how often have I seen the vigour of Nature dissolved by Pleasure, the edge and fineness of its parts matted and blunted by sloth and softness ? How often have I seen men rendered mean and contemptible by Success and Prosperity, for which they were not big enough ,  
whereas

whereas had the Mind been well cultivated and enriched with true Wisdom, Pleasure and Diversion themselves had refined and recruited Nature, and Power, Honour, and Plenty, had only placed worth and greatness in a better Light; this is true in its proportion from the lowest to the highest station; it requires sense and reason to govern and enjoy Prosperity; an obscure and narrow Fortune is most convenient both to conceal and preserve a Fool; for Plenty and Power, Dignity and Preferment do but expose him to scorn and danger, and it were well if the poor Creature could perish or suffer alone; but the mischief is, like a false and sandy Foundation, overthrows the Designs and Interests that are built upon him, and miserably betrays the confidences reposed in him: But how great soever the use of Reason be as to the Goods, it is no less in relation to the Evils of this World; for,

Thirdly, Reason is the Pilot of Humane Life, and steers it steddily through wild and tempestuous Seas, amidst the Rocks and Shelves of Lust and Fancy, Fortune and Folly, Ignorance, Errour,  
and

and a thousand Cheats and Impostures:  
'Tis this alone that enables Man to despise imaginary Evils, and vanquish real ones; it arms the mind with true and lasting Magnanimity, furnishes it with solid Comforts, and teaches it to extract Life and Health, Virtue and Wisdom, out of the madness and mutability of Men and Fortune, like Antidotes and Cordials out of things poisonous and baneful in themselves: It is not now to be wondered at, after this Account, how imperfect soever it be, of the use of Reason (which sufficiently shews how essential it is to the Being, the Ornament and Felicity of Humane Life) if I have resolved it to be the great Business of Man to improve and cultivate it, surely all the great Men of the World, and all the inspired Ones, have been of my Opinion; for their chief, if not only Design, ever was, either to obtain Wisdom themselves, or propagate it amongst others; and 'tis evident that God himself has ever carried on this one Design of advancing Wisdom amongst the Sons of Men; this is the preheminance of his Laws above those of Men, that these restrain the Actions, but those enlighten  
the

the Mind; these punish Offences and Crimes, but those by informing the Judgment, and strengthening the Reason of Man, prevent the commission of them, and direct and instigate him to the practise of Vertue. This then is the great Work that God and Man invite us to, that we should make daily progress and proficiency in Knowledge and Understanding, *That we should incline our ears to Wisdom, and apply our hearts to Understanding, that we shall seek her as Silver, and search for her as for hid Treasures:* And this is that which our Nature and State invite us too, for our Perfection and our Pleasure, our Success and our Security, our Repose and Tranquility, and in one word, our true Happiness depend upon it.

*Secondly,* It easily follows from the right Notion of Life, that we are to bid open Defiance to all those things which directly oppose, or secretly undermine the Authority of Reason, or any way obstruct the free exercise of its Power and Sovereignty; for 'tis to no purpose to travail and labour to advance Reason, if afterwards we refuse to be governed

governed and conducted by it, Reason, if we do not live by it, will serve only to increase our shame and guilt: St. Peter thinks *it better never to have known the way of Righteousness, than after the Knowledge of it to turn from the holy Commandments delivered unto us*, 2 Pet. 2. 21. To stifle the Sparks of Reason by negligence and sloth, to choak the Seeds of Wisdom and Perfection by a lazy or vicious education, is a great Crime; but to desert and betray our Reason, grown up to some maturity, to hold it in captivity and fetters, to defile and prostitute it, by compelling it to serve and flatter abominable Passions; this sure must be a far greater degree of wickedness and profaneness, and consequently must needs expose the Man to the scorn or pity of the wise and rational part of Mankind, to the reproaches and confusion of his own Conscience, and to the wrath and indignation of God; or if none of these Mischiefs should attend the contempt and profanation of Knowledge, yet there is one more of it self sufficient to make Man miserable, it precipitates him into all the irregularities and wildnesses imaginable, nothing being so insolent and ungovernable,

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governable, so savage and untamable as those Passions which are accustomed to over-power and master Reason, 'tis from all this manifest, That whoever loves Life, and would experience it a real Blessing, must with all his power set himself to remove and defeat, whatever may hinder his ready and entire Submission to the Dictates of Reason. Now the things which enfeeble the strength of our Reason, and baffle its Authority, are such as these, Fancy, Passion, Example, Custom, these we must ever Combat, till we have reduced them within their Bounds: Fancy surprizes, Passion overpowers, Custom and Example betray our Reason; we must therefore always oppose the giddiness of Fancy, and the violence of Passion, and guard our Minds against the insinuation of Custom and Example; and to do this well, to do it successfully, is of greater importance than any work of our Secular Calling, than any attendance upon Trade, or a Temporal Interest; this can only make us great, but that can make us wise; this can make us rich, but that will make us happy; this therefore must be the next great Business of Life, to assert the Majesty

jeſty and Sovereignty of Reaſon, and never ſuffer it to be held captive and enthralled by any vitious Principle, or impotent Luſt : Happy the Man who ſucceeds in this ! his Sincerity ſhall be to him as good as Infallibility ; his Conſcience ſhall never reproach him, nor God condemn him ; and tho he may not always hit the next way, he ſhall never wholly miſs the right way to *Happineſs*, therefore from this Notion of Life,

*Thirdly*, We may infer the poſſibility of *Humane Happineſs* in every ſtate ; for ſince to Live is but to act regularly , to uſe and employ our Powers and Faculties rationally ; and ſince Life, Perfection, and Fruition are one and the ſame thing, or elſe inſeparably and intimately united, it is evident that no Circumſtances can deſtroy our Happineſs, unleſs they deſtroy our Reaſon ; no Condition can render us miſerable, but that which can render it impoſſible for us to act rationally, that which obſtructs our attainment of knowledge, or our liberty of acting conformable to it. But what Circumſtances can theſe be ? what Condition can we fancy ? wherein it ſhall be impoſſible for a Chriſtian to know his Sovereign Good,

and pursue it, to learn his Duty, and to practise it ; wherein it shall be impossible for him to search and contemplate Truth, to love and follow after Righteousness and Goodness, and to be meek and humble, modest and magnanimous, just and charitable, pure and devout ; wherein, in one word, it shall be impossible for him to live by Faith, or which is the same thing in my sense, by Reason. *Solomon* long since observed, *That Wisdom uttered her voice in the Streets, and in the meetings of the High-ways.* This is more eminently true now, since the Reason of Mankind has been refined and defæcated by Revelation, and true Philosophy has been diffused and published through the World ; the Fountains of Truth and Wisdom lie open to all who thirst after them, and God no more denies any his Grace, than his Revelation. All which being so, 'tis evident that as God has put it in the power of every Man to act rationally, so has he put it in every Man's power to be happy ; that *Humane Happiness* is not precarious or dependant on Fortune, but our selves ; for Life consists not in the abundance of things which a Man possesses, but in the right

right use of them; *and better is a poor and wise Child, than an old and foolish King*, Eccl. 4. 13. For the good estate of the Mind consists not in foreign but domestick Possessions, not in the riches of Fortune, but of Grace and Vertue; and Fruition cannot consist, either in the abuse of Temporal Things, or the depravation of our Nature, but in the true Cultivation and Improvement of the one, and the right use of the other.

*Fourthly*, From hence, Lastly, it easily appears on what account length of days is a great Blessing, whether considered in *it self*, or with respect to a future Life. First in its self; If Life did consist in earthiness, that is, the scraping and raking together sums of Money, 'tis plain that Life must ebb and flow with our Fortune, and when ever the Revolutions of Times or Trades should put a stop to the career of our Success, and give a check to all our further Hopes and Projects, we should have nothing else to do but to break off the Thred of Life; for what use could we make of the remains of our miserable Days! Or if Life did consist in Sensuality, we should have little reason to desire to survive our

youth and strength, and length of days would be rather a Burden than a Blessing, for we should soon out-live our Pleasures, and shrink and wither into dull, impotent, and contemptible things. But if my Notion of Life be true, the Pleasures and Joys of it must increase and multiply with our Years, since Reason ought day by day to advance to a more perfect Maturity, and more absolute Authority : *With the Ancient is wisdom, and in length of days understanding, Job 12. 12. And the paths of the Righteous are like the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.* A thorough Experience of the emptiness and uncertainty of this World with a longer and more intimate acquaintance with another, should possess the Soul of this Man with a magnanimity that nothing could shake, with a tranquility that nothing could disturb : The Custom of doing good, together with the Peace and Delight that spring from the Reflections on it, should make the current of his Actions run smooth and calm ; his Observations on the Changes and Turns of Humane Affairs, the Rise and Declension of Parties and Causes, the secret Springs and  
Wheels



Wheels of the Passions of the Mind of Man, together with all the various Arts of managing them, do fill him with a sort of a Divine fore-knowledge, and entertain him with a wondrous prospect, and how happy must this Man be in himself? and how much honoured and revered by others, consulted as an Oracle, proposed as an Original of Goodness, the absolute Master of this World, and the immediate Heir of another. For which is the second thing.

Secondly, This is the only Notion of Life which can render it a Blessing in reference to its influence upon another; none but Rational Pleasures, which are the Antepast of Heaven, can enkindle our Thirst, or qualify us for the Enjoyment of those above; nothing but the wise and rational Employments of our Faculties can prepare us for a Heaven, or entitle us to it. Nay further, if Life had not this influence upon another World, length of days would be an Injury, not Advantage to us; it would only keep us from our Heaven, delay and put off our Happiness; but now, when according to this Notion of Life, every act of Life does perfect our Nature, en-

large our Capacity, and increase our Appetite of Glory, when every day that is added to Life by the production of some new fruit, does add new Stars to our Crowns of Righteousness, and new Treasures to our heavenly Inheritance : It is evident that a long Life is a great Blessing, not only on its own account, but also of that Life which we expect hereafter. Blessed God ! how conspicuous is thy Goodness in this whole contrivance ? how closely and inseparably hast thou united Vertue and Happiness ? and how natural is the assent from a rational Life here, to a glorious Life hereafter ?

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## SECT. II.

### *Of the different Kinds of Life.*

THEY who handle Morals nicely and abstractedly, seem to me to forget the Nature of their Subject, which requires to be handled after its own way, that is, practically, and if I might so say, grossly and corporeally ;  
for

for the Mixture and Variety, the Complication and Confusion, the Mutability and Inconstancy of Humane Affairs and Actions, which are the Matter of Morals, are not subject to Rules of Art and speculative Exactness : and therefore, tho I will follow the received Division of Life into Active and Contemplative, as squaring exactly with my Notion of it, yet I would not be understood to design under these Heads to treat of all the various kinds or states of Life; I touch not the Military, the Sacerdotal, the Scholastick Life, nor do I here use the words *Active* and *Contemplative* strictly and nicely; but by the first I understand any sort of publick Life, and any sort of private one by the last; nor do I much concern my self, whether the Life of a Trader or Artisan be logically reducible under the one or the other; or whether it ought to constitute a distinct and particular kind of Life by it self; but accomodating my self to the nature of things, and pursuing my own design, without any scrupulous regard to words or forms, I will discourse *first* of a Civil, *secondly* of a Trading or Negotiating, and *thirdly* of a Private and Retired Life. Having  
*first*

*first* in a Preliminary Chapter said something in general of the difference of an Active and Contemplative Life, and the Reasons or Grounds which ought to prevail and determine Man in his Election of the one or other.

## C H A P. I.

*The Conveniences and the Inconveniences of the Active and Contemplative Life. The Active more necessary. The several Grounds on which men determine their Choice, that is, Interest, Providence, Inclination, &c.*

**T**H E Felicity or Infelicity of Man depending not a little upon the choice he makes of his Course of Life, it is worth the considering which of these two Kinds, the Active or Contemplative, is to be preferred. If they be compared in themselves, the Active seems to have more in it of Glory, but also more of hazard ; it seems more serviceable to others, but not so easie to a Man's self: He therefore that would render each state perfect, and remove the Inconveniences

veniences of each, must study how to relieve the toil, and obviate the hazard of the Active, and to prevent the barrenness and ingloriousness of the Contemplative Life.

But which soever of these two be the more excellent in it self, 'tis certain the Active Life is the more necessary and indispensable to the well-being of Humane Society. Such is the Nature of Mankind, that being liable to various Necessities, it requires the various Relief of manifold Assistances, to which every Man is bound to contribute his share: We have Minds that must be cultivated, Bodies that must be provided for. The state either of War or Peace, hath its several wants, all which call for several Arts to wage the one, and enrich and adorn the other; without these we should find no Defence in War, nor Pleasure in Peace; without these Humane Life would grow wild and savage, and Humane Nature would be uncultivated and unsociable; without these our Houses had still been Caves and Grotts, our Food Acorns and Water, our Clothing the Spoils of Beasts, and the speculative Man would soon suffer those Necessities which would  
con-



convince him that he lived in a World , and in a Body, which required more at his hands than meer musing and thinking, and would soon force him to give over his Speculations for the more necessary Enquiries of Food and Raiment : And if he could be content with that Provision which Nature, unaided by Art and Industry, would yield him and the Beasts of the Field, yet would he not be able to promise himself the continuance of this mighty Blessing ; without Laws and Arms, the undisciplined Rabble would disturb his Musings, Avarice and Violence would invade his Walk, and drive him from his little Cottage and Brook where he had chose his Retreat : For these, and a great many other Reasons, the World hath enrolled the Authors and Inventors of Laws and Arts amongst their Gods , and has gratefully recorded the Memories of such as have been the Benefactors of Mankind : And holy Writ it self has not been wanting to do Honour to all such , for it has registred the Names of such as have excell'd in any thing beneficial to the Publick.

But however this be, whatever be the Excellence and Advantage of an Active  
above

above a Contemplative Life, either considered in it self, or with respect to its serviceableness and usefulness to the World, 'tis certain that Men generally speaking, are not determined to the one or to the other, by these Considerations, but by such particular Circumstances as often render that which is less excellent in it self, more fit and proper for them; thus sometimes Education trains Men up (shall I say,) or condemns them to a particular kind of Life, and the choice of others prevents the liberty of our own; sometimes the solicitation of Friends carries us against the very bent and inclination of Nature, and sometimes a lucky and unexpected Providence frees us from the trouble of perplexed Deliberation, and leads us on in methods which Humane Prudence could not have contrived; but most commonly of all, we take counsel from the nature of our state, and the necessities of our Fortune; how much is to be deferred to each of these, is a matter not easie to be decided; against Necessity we cannot dispute, against the Invitations of Providence we ought not, if we have but good proofs of the one or the other: But  
'tis

'tis too too often that weakness of Judgment or Courage makes us call that Necessity which is not, and the flattery of our Hopes makes us interpret our Dreams or Fancies Divine Auguries or Presages. As to Friends and Interest, I confess with the Ingenious Sir *Henry Wotton*, that an expert Man does more easily get up into the Saddle by the help of a Stirrop, than a much stronger by meer Force; yet it ought to be considered, that the Man who is unequal to the Designs of his Friends, renders their Patronage very difficult, but his own Life more. As to the bent or inclination of Nature, so mutable are the Tempers, or at least the Fancies of Mankind, that this is a Discovery not soon to be presumed upon, or else I should as soon advise to give up ones self to this, as to any other Guide. The truth is, the truest Measures in this Enquiry are to be taken from a thorough knowledge of our selves, and of the different Courses of Life about which we deliberate; but alas! they are but few whom a propitious Providence has left at liberty to enter into this Deliberation, and fewer that are capable of forming a true Resolution upon it: I am sure  
there

there is no Enquiry of Humane Life wherein there is more need of an Infalible Guide, and therefore I would counsel the young to consult God in the first place, and next the most sage and experienced they can find out, for they stand in a place where many ways meet, and if they take the wrong, they will certainly wander far, and it may be never recover the right. And as to others, who have struggled long against Wind and Tide, who have stord long upon the Billows of Vulgar Errors of their own private Lusts and Fancies, they will be happy, I think, if after long Experience of their Folly, they make with all speed for Land, and take the first Harbour where they can ride in safety.

#### CHAP.

## C H A P. II.

*Of the Civil Life, or the Active Life of a Gentleman.*

SECT. 1. *The Gentleman's Obligations to an Active Life, from the consideration of what he owes to God, to his Country, to himself. The Active Life not injurious to the Gentleman's Pre-eminence, Liberty, Pleasure.* SECT. 2. *The regulation of the Civil Life, i. e. the Knowledge and Vertues necessary to this sort of Life. The Constancy required throughout the whole Course of the Gentleman's Life. Some Vacations from Business necessary, and to what ends.*

**B**Efore I go about to set down those Rules which may render Men of Rank and Fortune, belov'd, eminent, and happy in their station, I think it necessary to convince such of the Obligations they lye under to be some way or other useful and serviceable to the World ; for 'tis in vain to talk of the Knowledge and  
Vertue



Vertue necessary to support and adorn a Civil Life ; to such as perswade themselves that they are born only to follow their own Humour and Fancy ; and that it is the Prerogative of their Birth and Fortune to be idle, ignorant, and loose.

Sect. 1. This then is the first thing I would fain make Gentlemen sensible of, that they cannot without impardonable Guilt and Reproach, waste and fool away their Life and Fortune ; and I think this would not be very hard to effect, if they would please to make but a very slight Reflection upon the Arguments I here address to them. You owe more to God, and to your Country , not to add to your selves, tho' that be true too in a proper sense , than any others do. To God---- to his Providence you owe it, that you were born to those Fortunes which others toil for ; that you are the Masters of that Time which others are forced to devote to their Wants and Necessities, and that you are placed at first in those advantageous heights which others climb to by slow and tedious steps ; your Guilt therefore is greater than the mean Man is capable of, while you invade the Honour of that God , from  
E                      whom

whom alone you derive yours; while *you* dethrone *Him* who has raised *you*, and employ all your Power and Treasure against that Being from whom you received them; no Ingratitude, no Treachery or Baseness like that of a Favourite and Confident. And as you owe to God, so do you to your Country, more than other Men; you are they who should be the Support and Ornament of it; you are placed in higher Orbs, not that like Meteors your ominous blaze should be the gaze and terror of the Multitude, but that like Stars you might lighten and beautify, animate and impregnate the inferiour World, for you, like them, should have an enlarged Prospect, a swift and constant Motion, a bountiful and benign Influence: If your Vertues do not more distinguish you from the Crowd than your Fortunes, you are exposed, not honoured, by the eminence of your Station, and you debauch and betray your poor Country by your sin and folly, which your Example, your Wisdom, your Courage, and your Bounty, with all those other great Vertues which Persons of your Rank should shine with, should protect  
and

and enrich, and raise to the highest Reputation of Vertue and Power. Miserable must that Kingdom be, whose rich and great Ones are as much more impudently wicked, as they are more fortunate than other Men; when they, whose Example should awe the Vitious, contribute not a little to corrupt the Vertuous part of it, and to debauch the very Genius and Spirit of the Nation: When they, who should be Patriots of their Country, instead of being Men of Travel and Reading, of Abilities and Experience, of Honour and Activity, are versed only in Essences and Perukes, Game-houses and Stews, and have so far lost the Qualities of a Gentleman, that they are meaner, falser, and cowardlier than the lowest of the People; those must indeed be strange Courts, Counsels, Parliaments, Armies which are filled and influenced by such as these, that must be a wretched State where Men make their Court by Debauchery, and know no other Politicks than what an inveterate Aversion to the National Government and Constitution, or a more inveterate one to Religion and Vertue suggest.

But if your Country move you not , consider yet what you owe your selves: Idleness is both a Reproach and Burden; for what can be more dishonourable, than to be good for nothing; or more irksome to an active Nature, such as Man's is, than to have nothing to imploy it? What can be more shameful, than for a wealthy, or well-born Man, to be the pity or sport of his Country, or the inward scorn even of his Domesticks and Neighbours? And what can be a greater Plague, than for one who is Master of his whole Time, and of an ample Fortune, not to know how to imploy the one or the other, but in such Courses as tend to the disgrace of his Family, the ruin of his Country, and the damnation of his Soul? *You* ought too, to remember that great Fortunes do generally mark Men out for great Troubles, as well as great Enjoyments; and were there no other Motive to a vigorous and active Life, but this one, that it did fortifie the Courage, and harden the Temper, this should be sufficient to any Man, who will but consider to how many Changes and Revolutions, how many Disasters and Mischiefs a great Fortune renders

ders Men obnoxious, so that when Men had not yet entertained the Opinion of the unlawfulness of Self-murder, Poison, as appears from *Livi's* Reflection on *Masanissa's* Present to his Mistress, was a part of the Domestick Provision of the Families of the Great, and a Poison-bearer seems to have been almost as natural an Office as a Cup-Bearer.

The Sum of all is, Gifts of Fortune, like those of Grace or Nature, as they capacitate and qualifie, so do they design and oblige Men to suitable Duties, and Christianity expects Increase proportionable to Mens Talents. Not Idleness and Luxury, not Ignorance and Debauchery, but Knowledge and Vertue, and a more eminent degree of Service to God and Man, ought to be the distinctive Character of the Rich and Great, (for how should that be the Privilege of an illustrious Birth and ample Fortune, which is a Reproach and Dishonour to Humane Nature?) These are the Abilities that constitute Gentlemen truly great, that makes them the Props of a sinking State, or the Stars and Glories of a flourishing one; this is that



which the Safety and Glory of your Country, and your own Happiness and Posterity demand at your Hands ; and happy were it if the Laws and Customs of our Country, as once those of the best constituted Kingdoms and Commonwealths, did exact Vertue and Industry with the greatest rigour, and punished Idleness and Riot with Infamy, Banishment, and Death.

Nor has any one reason to complain, that to oblige the Gentleman to an active and industrious Life, is to debase his Quality, or to invade his Liberty, much less to rob him of all the Pleasures and Advantages he is born to ; on the quite contrary, an active Vertue is the Honour of a Gentleman ; this is the only solid Foundation the Love and Esteem of his Country can be built on ; all other Advantages of Fortune do but adorn him as a Pageant, to be the sport and gaze of the Crowd, and all that have sense enough to distinguish between Merit and Fortune, will inwardly despise the Fool and Sluggard, whatever Courtship and Complement they may make to the Esquire and Landlord. And as Business can be no Diminution of his Honour, so  
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neither can it be of his Liberty ; for not to insist upon that great Truth, That the Service of Vertue is the only Freedom or Liberty of Man ; not to mind you that the Business of Men of Wealth and Birth is always a matter of Choice not Necessity, they being ever in a Condition to retire when they shall judge their Privacy and Leisure more valuable than their Employments. This one single Consideration cannot but silence this Suggestion, That no Man is less Master of himself and Time, than the Man that has an ample Fortune and no Business ; for he is always exposed to the forms and impertinences, to the humours and sottishness of a number of People as idle and ignorant as himself ; and I think there can be no Servitude so wretched, as that to Luxury and Vanity, nor any Confinement or Attendance so tedious as a compliance with the folly, with the trifling and looseness of the World ; but Business is at all times a comely Excuse, and never fails of putting a Man handsomely in possession of his Liberty, and the disposal of his own Time and Actions.

But of all the Aspersions with which Addressees of this kind are wont to be assaulted, there is none more palpably injurious than this, That to condemn a Gentleman to Business, is to rob him of his Pleasures; for the truth is, 'tis Business and Employment that gives gust and relish to Pleasure; 'tis this that prevents the Disease of Pleasure, Surfeit and Satiety, and makes Diversion always new, and Nature always vigorous; 'tis true indeed, a rational and manly Employment, so raises and fortifies the Mind, that it is above being a Slave to Sensual Pleasure, and so entertains it, that it needs not make vitious and sinful Pleasures a Refuge against the dulness and nauseousness of Life: But after all, tho' all this be true, there is one consideration more important still, which is, that the Business of a Gentleman, if discharged as it ought to be, is always attended with Pleasure, and that a more brisk and sensible one than he can find in any thing else; for whether he Protects the Oppressed, or Opposes the Violent and the Unjust by his Power, whether he steers the Ignorant and the Simple to their Harbour, by his Wisdom, or relieve  
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the Necessity of the Poor by his Wealth? whether he support a sinking Friend, or raise a deserving Creature? whether he assert the Authority of Laws, and maintain the Rights of his Country? In a word, whether he assist the publick or the private by his Fortunes, his Abilities, or Vertues, all these Works have something in them so great, so generous, that I cannot but think the Opportunities and Capacities of these the highest Priviledges and Prerogatives of a Fortunate Birth. It was the Sabbath, the Rest of God, when he beheld all his Works, that they were exceeding good; nor can I believe God took more pleasure in the Creation than he does in the Preservation and Government of the World: How pleasing then must be the Reflections upon these God-like Works; for tho' this be not to create a new World, it is certainly to imbellish, govern, and support the old. There is little reason to imagine why the Works of Vertue should procure their Authors less pleasure than those of Fancy, Wit, and Learning do theirs. Why the Poet should feel a bigger Joy rise from a witty Poem, the Painter from a well finished Piece, the Architect from

a well contrived Building, the Scholar from a just and regular Discourse, than a Gentleman should from the happy and honourable Effects of Wisdom, Courage, Bounty, and Magnanimity; these sure are the greater Excellencies, and as the Original is more noble, so is the Issue too; for certainly to preserve the Lives and Fortunes of Men, is much more than to make them seem to live in imagery; to raise a Family, is much more than to contrive and build a House to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and actually disperse the Clouds and Sorrows of the Afflicted, by a present and vigorous remedy, is much more than to treat the Fancy of the soft and vain; and in one word, actually to compose the Divisions, allay the Heats, govern the Impetuosities, and restrain the Exorbitant Passions of Men by the force of Laws, by the influence of Example, and that Authority and Ascendant which the Fortunes and Abilities of the great Ones give them over their Inferiours, is in my Judgment, a much more signal Service to God and Man, than it can ever be to debate a Controversie with the most distinguishing Judgment, or write an Exhortation



hortation with warmth and briskness.

Having thus demonstrated that Persons of Rank and Fortune lye under many and strong Obligations to activity in their Sphere, and confuted those Objections which are commonly opposed against it, I will proceed to lay before them, with all due respect, such Rules as may guard them against that Envy and Danger, that Toil and Discontent, which usually accompanies the Notion of the Great, as Dirt, or Dust, or Heat that of their Chariots, and which on the other side, may render their activity a great instrument of their Felicity; for I would not that such as are the common Patrons and Benefactors of Mankind, should meet with no other recompence but trouble and hazard, as if, like Clouds, they could not refresh and impregnate the Earth, unless they were themselves dissolved and wasted into showers: I would have every worthy Action, be an Accession to their Greatness, and every honourable Performance carry with it a Reward, which should not depend upon the humour of the Prince, or levity of the People.

Sect.

Sect. 2. *Rules to be observed by the Gentleman in a publick Station, or in order to the Happiness of a Civil Life.*

1. He must be endowed with *Knowledge*.
2. With *Vertues* proper and necessary to his Rank and Station.
3. He ought to be constant, resolved, and vigorous throughout the whole Conduct and Course of his Life and Affairs.
4. His Time ought not to be so wholly taken up in Business, as not to leave Vacancies for *Religion, Meditation, Friendship, and Diversion*.

*First, Of the Gentleman's Knowledge.*  
 There is no Fortune that *Knowledge* better becomes, or that stands more in need of it, than a Gentleman's; without it an Estate is rather cumbersome than useful, and the ignorant Owner must be the Tool or Instrument of anothers Ambition or Interest, the Prey of a menial Servant, or the Property of an imperious Wife or wanton Child, or which is worse, of some crafty Retainer, who  
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grows impudent with the favour, rich with the Spoils, both of the Honour and Fortune of his Master : The best that can befall such a one is, if he have the good luck to light into good hands, and joyn himself with a right Party, he may be the Apendage of some others Fortune, the shade and umbria of another, who intercepts the Smiles and Thanks due to him ; he may, in a word, talk and act by the Sense and Reason of his Party. This is a poor and contemptible Condition to a Man of Birth and Fortune, to be incapable of imploying or improving the Advantages he is born to, and to be only the Prey or Tool of the Cunning, Avarice, Ambition, and impotent Passions of others ; or at best, the Instrument of a wiser Man ; for the Wise is born to rule the Fool.

Nor is this all, the Gentleman's Ignorance is so much the more worthy of reproach, because he appears to be born to greater Opportunities of Knowledge, as he that stands upon a more eminent height does naturally enjoy a more free and open prospect.

But what is worse than all this, a Patrician Fortune joyned with a Plebeian Un-

Understanding, renders a Man not more liable to suffer Mischief, than apt to commit them ; for if the Man have much Passion, and no Understanding, as Wealth is apt to inspire Men with Pride and Wilfulness, tho' it cannot with Wisdom ; what can be expected from such a Person, who hath power enough to execute his Passions, and no reason to restrain them, who looks upon it as a contumely to be opposed , and tho' he hath no sense himself, is too big to hear it from another ; what can such a Man be but a Plague to himself and others, and what can his Wealth and Interest be , but restless Instruments of Evil. It is then indispensibly necessary , as well for the avoiding Evil as doing good , that the great man be endowed with a good understanding.

The first thing he ought to be well acquainted with is Religion, as the only source of solid Wisdom , and the main ground of a just and lasting Reputation ; nor indeed can I see how a Man can be considerable without it ; for tho' base Ends require base Instruments in all other Cases, I see not how either Prince or People can trust those Men who are false

false to God and themselves, 'tis scarce to be expected, that he who Sacrifices his Religion and his Reason, that is, himself to any Lust or Passion, should be nice and scrupulous of giving up a remoter Interest or Obligation to it. But when I say the Gentleman should be acquainted with Religion, I do not mean that he should perplex or amuse himself with the Disputes that have debauch'd, or Subtleties and Niceties which have dispirited or enervated Christianity, I would have him have so much illumination as to be able to distinguish between Natural Religion and the Politicks, Revealed Religion and the Phanxies and Whimsies of Man: I would have him thoroughly instructed in the Reasons and Grounds of our common Christianity, and study and ruminate them till he feel the power of them, and find himself formed and impressed by them. He understands Religion well, who learns from it what it is to be just, and derives from it Courage enough to dare to be so. I should think it a necessary part of this Knowledge, or at least a good Accomplishment in a Gentleman to be so far acquainted with Ecclesiastical Story, as not to be ignorant



rant what influence Religion, or the Pretences of it has upon the World, and what use cunning Men have ever made of it, by what Degrees or what Arts the Maxims of the World have been incorporated into Religion, and the Church hath wound and insinuated it self into the State. Thus you will discern what the true Measures of Religion are, you will have a just regard for wise Constitutions without bigotry; you will free your selves from all those Doubts and Scruples which usher in Atheism and Profaneness; and, in a word, you will find Religion the true Standard of Wisdom and Discretion, the effectual Instrument of private and publick Good, and the infallible Guide to Honour and Happiness.

Next to the *Knowledge* of Religion, follows the *Knowledge* of the World, which may be divided into the Knowledge of Matters and Men, which is so necessary in every part, in every act of Life, but especially of a publick one, that I cannot but wonder at the vanity of such as can fancy it possible to maintain a solid Reputation in their Country, and fill any Station honourably or happily without it. The confidence of an  
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Emperick, or other such wretched Projectors and Undertakers, seems to me Modesty and Vertue, compared to the shamelesness and wickedness of such men as obtrude themselves upon Affairs of a publick Nature, unstudied, unversed, in Things or Men, that is totally unqualified; which whoever considers the difficulty of managing them well, or the mischievous consequences of miscarrying in them, must confess. Let the Gentleman therefore study the Laws and Constitutions of the Realm, its Changes and Revolutions in their Causes, Progress, and Effects, its Natural and Political Strengths and Weaknesses, Defects and Excellencies, together with its Foreign Interests, Relation, and Dependances; nor let him be wholly ignorant of the Frame and Polity of other Kingdoms, tho he ought to be best versed in our own; he must travel abroad, but dwell at home; for I would have him have a Veneration, not Superstition, for the Laws and Customs of his own Country; for I doubt the Wisdom of our own Nation is not great enough to justify the neglect, much less contempt of that of Foreign Ones; and because what they

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call the Law of Nature is only the Law of right Reason, in those great Precepts of it, which seem immutable and inviolable, and the same in all Times and Places. He ought not to be a stranger to this, least being ignorant of the true Grounds of Humane Society, and of the Nature and Obligation of particular Laws; every new Emergency, Change, or Deviation from the common Road, discover his Insufficiency; for 'tis a miserable thing to see how, through the simplicity and weakness of some, and the subtlety and cunning of others, Laws which should be the Fences and Bulwarks of the People, are often made only their Chains and Fetters; and those publick and solemn Ties which were designed to strengthen and fortifie the Constitution, become the most fatal Engines of undermining and subverting it. I have observed many, who would be excellent Persons in a regular and calm state of Affairs, that are miserably perplexed, and at a loss, or wretchedly abused or imposed upon in a disordered and unsettled one; like a Person of my Acquaintance, who rides well in inclosed and narrow Roads, but her Brains begin to swim, and  
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her heart to fail her on Downs and Plains.

After all, that I may not seem to be treating rather of Speculation than Action, and to have proposed such an Extension of Knowledge, as if I were recommending rather a Life of Study than of Business, I must put you in mind, that the design of this sort of Learning ought to be to make men Wise, not Subtle, Judicious, not Disputative. That Curiosity or Diligence in Matters minute, or subtle, has more in it of amusement than use, and that to lay the Foundation too deep and broad, does seldom quit the cost; and, in one word, it seems to me to be in Policy, as in Religion, he is the most prudent who best understands the particular Laws or Precepts of his particular Station, as he is the most religious who is best learned, not in the universal Scheme of Theology, but the regulation of his own Affections, and the conduct of his own Life.

But in vain does he study Things who knows not Men, for Man is the Instrument of Power and Policy, and whoever knows how to manage and gain an Ascendant over him, is the most confi-

derable in his Country, and able to do the greatest mischief or the greatest good: But when I talk of knowing Men, I mean not only such a *knowledge* of particular Persons as may instruct you what to hope, or what to fear from them, what employments or trusts they are fit or unfit for, and, in a word, who are proper or improper Instruments in different Affairs, Times and Circumstances; who are fit to be the Partners of your Pleasures and Diversions, who of your Confidences and Secrets, and such like; but also the knowledge of Humane Nature to be thoroughly read in all the Springs and Resorts of Human Actions, in all the various Passions and Diseases of the mind of Man, with all their Causes and Cures, and to be able to distinguish the genuine and natural from the acquired and artificial Person; and because not simple Persons only, but Times and Ages, Nations, Cities, and lesser Bodies and Societies, have their particular Temper and Genius, these must not be neglected neither. This is the Knowledge, which together with a dexterous use and application of it, is the very life and soul of worldly Prudence, and makes up the beginning, mid-



middle, and end of true Policy ; but after all, both with respect to the Publick, and a Man's own Good , that ought to be a Rule for the Man of Business which *St. Paul* prescribes for a Bishop, *Let him first learn to rule his own House well.* He that will be truly wise, should know himself first, e're he goes about to know the World, and begin the practise of his Politicks in his own Family, and in the settlement and due administration of his Domestick Affairs, in which if he cannot succeed, I must confess I cannot see what Encouragement either Prince or People can have to confide in such a one; for the disorders or dissipations of a private Fortune are very ominous Presages of a Mal-administration of publick Trust. Nor can I see what can induce such a Man to undertake it, but the meer hopes of repairing his private Dilapidations with the Stones and Timber of the publick.

But after all, how necessary soever I account Knowledge in a Gentleman engaged in an Active Station, yet I cannot but observe, that whether we regard the Publick or the Private , Wickedness has ever been more fatal and dishonourable to

both, than Ignorance, and all Trusts have suffered more in the hands of the false and the base, than of the unfit and insufficient : Therefore

*Secondly*, The Gentleman ought to be enriched with Vertues, especially those which become his Rank and Station. Knowledge is but the Seed of Vertue, and like that, it only rots and putrifies, if it grow not up into excellent Habits, and bring not forth the Fruits of virtuous Actions. There is scarce any Station which does not require a particular Vertue, either to discharge or adorn it; one Patience, another Courage, a third Vigilance, and so on; there being scarce any Office or Business which is not liable to some particular Inconveniencies and Temptations : But it being impossible for me to prosecute all these, I will only insist on two or three which are essential to all true Greatness and Honour, and if I am not much mistaken, to a happy and prosperous dispatch of all Affairs, I am sure to the Security and Felicity of the Publick and Private, these are Integrity, Magnanimity, Humanity.

First, Integrity. By Integrity I mean two things, Justice and Truth: The first  
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to regulate our Actions; the second our Words. Nor do I take Justice in a beggerly barretting Sense, as if the Gentleman had acquitted himself of a due well enough, if there were any plausible pretence to excuse a Violation or Omission of it; as if he were to regard more what the Law could compel, than what Honour did oblige him to; and by Honour I mean the Testimony of his own Conscience, both concerning his diligent and impartial Enquiries after the right and sincerity in pursuing it; for I would not have him appear to do right, rather out of the fear of Infamy, than love of Vertue. The word of a Gentleman ought to be fixed and unmoveable as Fate; sacred and inviolable as the Altar. Contracts, and Evidences, and Seals, and Oaths were devised to tye Fools, and Knaves, and Cowards: Honour and Conscience are the more firm and sacred ties of Gentlemen. Nor must this Honour extend only to private Dealings, but much more to publick; in which, good God! how comely, how noble is it to see Integrity triumphing over Interest and Passion? To see a great Man preferring Truth and Justice to the favour or menaces of

Princes, and readily quitting all Interest and all Parties to support the publick Safety and Honour, or fall with it. But as Heroick as I would have the Gentleman, I would not have him vain, I would not have him led or imposed upon by empty Noise and Names, I would have him love a good Name, but much more a good Conscience, for I would have him as Judicious as Resolved, as Bright and Luminous as Brave and Inflexible; for I admire not an Integrity that bids defiance to Prudence and right Reason; I love a steady Faith and unmoveable Justice, but not Romance and Fancy; I would have a great Man not insensible of a difference between Loyalty and Slavery, between Tyranny and Anarchy; and in the same manner he must be able to distinguish between a Serpentine Subtlety and a stupid Insufficiency, and want of necessary Address and Dexterity; without such a competency of Knowledge, all will be but Folly, not Integrity, Vanity, not Constancy. As there is an Integrity in Action, so is there in Speech to, it seems to me not to consist in bare Truth only, but also in an ingenious openness and freedom, cloudiness and ambiguity; seems

seems to me rather fit to disguise Ignorance or Design, than to pourtray or express the Sentiments of a wise or an upright Mind, yet in Words, as well as Deeds, there is an Extream,thô frankness and openness in Conversation, like a free and generous Air, become a Gentleman. I would not have Freedom violate Discretion, nor Simplicity and Openness lessen Greatness; too many and wide Apertures, if they add Beauty, do certainly diminish the strength of a Building.

Secondly, The next vertue beſeeming a Gentleman,is Magnanimity : By which I do not mean an empty Tumor, but solid Greatness of Mind, which ought to discover it self in every Instance of his Life ; I say in every Instance, for I count it not enough to bear Disappointments with moderation, unless he bear his Success so too : I count it not enough to encounter Dangers with Courage, unless he encounter his Pleasures with as great ; and in a word, there ought to be something even in his Diversions and Entertainments, as well as in his Business and Employment,that may speak the strength and wealth, and self-sufficiency of his Mind. You'l easily conclude this with  
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me, if you allow these two or three things to be essential to true Greatness of Mind ; an Invincible Courage and Resolution, a rational and generous Activity, and an enlarged and publick Spirit, which you cannot but allow, unless you think that the Coward and Slave, the Sluggard or Sott, the Sordid and Selfish may be reckon'd amongst the Magnanimous. But what Principle, what Foundation is able to support so mighty a weight? Natural Courage may make a Man brave Danger, or it that will not Ambition may, while it presents him with a more formidable Evil if he turn his back upon the other ; but what shall make the Man modest and humble in his Triumphs, who was gallant and daring in Fight? Passion and Revenge may make Men firm and fierce in their Contests and Oppositions, but what can make a Man forgive when he is in a Condition to revenge an Injury. The lust of Power and Honour and Wealth, that is, Self-love may render a Man active and industrious, but what is it that can prevail with him to Sacrifice his own Interest and his Families to publick Good? Honour has been generally thought

thought the most likely Principle to do all this. I must confess, a Breast inflamed with love of Honour, seems to me incapable of any mean or base Impression; but then the Notion of Honour ought to be justly stated; for if by this we understand the Smiles and Courtships of the Great, or the Praises and Acclamations of the People, it had need be in settled Times a wise Court and a modest People: I doubt there is not Judgment enough in the People, nor Plainness and Simplicity enough in Courts to give Men and Actions a true value; and therefore, if a Man would propose Honour as the reward of his Actions, it ought to be that which consists in the Approbation of such who are able and disinterested Judges; a mistake in this point is often of very ill consequence, and perverts the whole Course of Humane Life, betraying either into factious Opposition, or sordid and unworthy Compliance. Nor is this the only Inconvenience that the Love of Honour is obnoxious to, that Men may be misled and abused by false and mistaken Notions of it, but it also often happens, that Envy and Emulation in particular Men, or the Violence of a  
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prevailing Faction, or the Iniquity of Times may stifle and oppress the Merit, or traduce and blast the Integrity of the most excellent Actions, in which Cases, I doubt, the secret Opinion of two or three vertuous Men, or an Expectation of greater Justice from future Times, will be too weak a Cordial to support an injured Vertue, if its only Nourishment and sustenance be Honour. I think therefore Religion is the only Basis on which Magnanimity can stand, by which I mean a love of rational and vertuous Actions upon wise and solid Grounds, a secret Delight and Complacency in the performance of them, accompanied with the Peace and Serenity of Mind that springs from Reflection upon them, and the Joy which a firm Persuasion that God will be our Rewarder breeds in us; this, as it will secure us against the Errors, so will it against the Inconstancy and Injustice of the World; this will minister sufficient Motives to generous Actions, when we meet nothing but Discouragements from all things else; this, if it will not make a publick Employment honourable, will always make it safe; this, if it cannot render great Places profitable,

fitable, will ever render Retirement pleasant, and in all the Changes of Times and Humours, will preserve a Man steady and calm in himself.

But whilst I recommend Magnanimity, I must not forget that there are Folies and Vices which often are wont to usurp its Name. I never thought that the love of our Country did imply a neglect, much less a contempt of our private Fortune: That a vain Confidence or Presumption in provoaking and irritating Dangers ought to pass for Courage; for this were to make Fortitude and Prudence incompatible: Nor do I think that a violent Intrusion into Business; or an indiscreet intangling a Man's self in much, or ingaging in any that is foreign or impertinent, deserves the Name of Industry or Activity, or Pride, Stiffness, and Savageness, the Name of Firmness and Constancy; for, in a word, I would have Magnanimity rather lovely than haughty, rather revered than dreaded; Therefore,

*Thirdly*, Humanity is the next Vertue to be aimed at. Nothing can be more fitly joyned with Magnanimity than Compassion, with Courage than Tender-  
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ness, nor with the felicity of a great Fortune, than Charity or Bounty. I cannot think that there is a truer Character of Greatness, than to be a Sanctuary to the Injured, a Patron to Vertue and Merit, a Counsellor to those that Err, and a support to the Afflicted, the Needy and Defenceless. In these things consist the Life and Substance of Humanity, the Ornamental part of it is *Affability* or *Courteousness*; the Art of Behaviour lies in a narrow Compass, the whole skill of it consisting in obliging, which he shall never miss, who has once possessed his Soul with Tenderness and Goodness, for then every Word, every Action, together with the whole Air of Deportment, will be animated with a resistless sweetness, and will be nothing else but the Pourtraiture and Expression of those excellent Dispositions, by this means too the deportment will be Natural, not Artificial; and tho' it be generally kind, it will be more particularly so, where it meets with a more moving Occasion, to which if it be added, that the Carriage of a Gentleman ought to be Humble, but not Popular, Courteous, but not Cheap or Prostitute, you will decline all the considerable Errors



rors to which Affability is obnoxious.

It was the Custom of the Ancients to deliver their Instruction in short and plain Sentences, without a labour'd Exhortation or passionate Enforcement. And certainly there is such a commanding Authority in the Dictates of Truth and Wisdom, such a Divinity, Majesty, and Loveliness in solid Vertues, that did the Simplicity and Probity obtain in these, which is supposed to have done in those Times, advice of this sort would easily make its way to the Hearts of Men without the Assistance of any Motives. But I dare not be either so confident of my own Performance, or of the Times, as not to think it necessary to close the Advice of these Paragraphs, with some Arguments and Motives to these Vertues.

Shall I make use here of the Topicks of Religion? Shall I invite you to Integrity and Magnanimity from the Consideration of the Omniscience and Providence of God? Shall I put you in mind how little Sordidness, Falshood and Fear; how little Pride and Insolence can become the Principles and Perswasions of a Christian, concerning the Emptiness and  
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Vanity of this World, or the true Happiness and lasting Glory of another? Shall I press you to Humanity, to Meekness and Humility, by calling to your remembrance the Life of Jesus, your Frailty and Mortality, and what is worse, your Sins and Follies? Shall I show you how mutable and inconstant your Fortune is; and if it were not, how accidental fantastick and inconsiderable a distinction this makes between you and persons of a lower Rank? and that they stand at least upon the same level with you, with respect to the substantial and solid Interests of Humane Nature, that is, the favour of God, Vertue, Grace, and Glory? Alas! I am afraid you have generally but little Relish or Gust of this sort of Arguments.

But have you as little value for your Country as Religion? Are you as little moved by the Ruin of this, as the Corruption of that? Behold your Country once formidable abroad, and well compact within; ah! now what Reproach and Contumelies does it not suffer abroad? what Convulsions at home? Its Wealth has neither Service nor Defence in it. Its Numbers are without Courage, and its  
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Forces have nothing of Strength or Terror in them. Why all this, it bleeds in your Factions and Divisions, it reels and staggers under your Softness and Luxury; 'tis betrayed by your Falshood and Cowardize; Ah! that its Reformation might begin where its Degeneracy has, and that it might recover by your Virtues the Honour it has lost and forfeited by your Vices. Pardon me, I do not here suppose that there are none exempt from this Accusation; that in the Body of the Nobility and Gentry there are not, even in this degenerate Age, some bright Instances of a true English Courage and Integrity; I only wish that there were more, that there were enough to Atone for the rest, and to prop up this declining *State*. Nor is it a petulant Humor, but a Zeal for your Honour particularly, as well as that of the Nations, that now acts me; for give me leave to put you in mind at length

That your Honour, your Interest, and your Happiness depend upon your Integrity, Magnanimity and Humanity; nor is it possible that the one should survive the other. First your *Honour*. The whole World is possessed in favour of

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these

these Vertues; and however it hath farred with some other, these have ever been in vogue, not amongst the best only, but worst of Mankind. I have indeed understood that there are some who have openly professed and defended Intemperance and Incontinence, but I think none ever yet have in earnest undertook the Patronage of *Cowardize*, *Perfidiousness*, *Inhumanity*, or *Insolence*. I have never yet met with any, who have not thought it scandalous and reproachful to find less *Faith*, less *Honour*, less *Goodness*, or if you please more shifting *Cowardise*, *Falshood*, and *Sordidness* in his Lordship, or his Worship, than in a Groom or Lackey. Nor did I ever find, that Lands and Scutcheons, wealthy Relations and honourable Ancestors, were ever looked upon as Apologies or Mitigations, but rather Aggravations of such Baseness and Degeneracy; nor could any Man ever think it a Commendation to be the Sinks and Sewers of a Noble Family, the Ruines of an ancient, and once stately Pile, or the Lees and Dreggs of a rich Liquor long since drawn off, and evaporated. Nor does your Honour only, but Secondly your Interest depend on these Vertues.

tues. If you want these, I see not what you can possess, that can either gain you the Favour of the Prince, or Esteem of the People : This sure is the Reason why these Vertues have ever been in such credit in the World, because their influence is so necessary, so universally serviceable, whether to the Publick, or to Friends and Dependants; now that Integrity which can give others ground confidently to rely upon you, that Generosity and Magnanimity which raises their Hopes and Expectations, does naturally give you an Authority and Ascendant over them, and you become the Masters of their Lives and Fortunes, whilst they promise themselves the Protection or Improvement of them from your Vertues: To these then you must owe the Patronage and Confidence of those above you, the Dependence, Love, and Esteem of those below you, without which, what can you effect, what can you enjoy truly great or considerable; you are impotent and contemptible as Ploughmen and Sailors when solitary and abandon'd; your Retinue and Dependance, your Friends and Admirers make you powerful: In short, a Man of Birth and Fortune that is per-



fidious, cowardly, selfish and proud, has not in my Judgment, or deserves not to have half the Interest an honest Yeoman or plain-dealing Trades-man has in City or Country; for what Confidence can be placed in such a one; will he be tender of the Honour of his Country, or his Friend, who has no sense of his own? or will he ever be either a good Patron or Friend, who is ready to sacrifice all to his private Avarice? Nor is it a matter of small importance, that Reputation founded in Vertue surmounts all sorts of Difficulties, and Crowns all Undertakings with Success, and since Men are naturally backward when they are jealous and distrustful, but prompt and forward where they are secure and confident: It has ever been observed, that Integrity (if not destitute of competent Prudence) has in dispatch of Affairs ever out-stripped Craft and Subtlety. But the weightiest Consideration of all is, that these Vertues, if they be not the surest Foundation of Greatness, are doubtless of Happiness; for they will make a man find a tranquility in his Mind, when he cannot in his Fortune: The Conscience of a Man's own Uprightness will alleviate the  
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the toil of Business, and sweeten the harshness of ill Success and Disappointments, and give him an humble Confidence before God, when the Ingratitude of Man, or the Iniquity of Times, rob him of all other Reward.

Having thus given an Account of these two things, wherein consist the sufficiency of a Man of Business, that is, *Knowledge* and *Vertue*, I will proceed to the consideration of the third Rule.

*Thirdly*, The Gentleman ought to be Constant, Resolved, and Vigorous in his Motion. *Constancy* and *Vigour*, whether in the acquisition of Knowledge, or improvement of Vertue, or Management of Affairs are of the greatest moment and importance. I ever prefer a strong before a fine Edge; Industry and Resolution before Wit and Parts: He that makes a daily progress, how slow soever it be, will in time reach its Stage; vast Bodies and mighty Armies, by constant marches, have travelled through those unknown Regions, which a single Person would almost despair of compassing in his Lifetime. To what a height does the Tree raise its Head, tho' its Root fix in the heart of the Earth, because tho' it grow

slowly, and even imperceptibly, yet it grows constantly, and receives some accession every moment. This Rule, as I insinuated before, is applicable to Knowledge, Vertue, and Business. To *Knowledge*, to what would not an ingenious Person, furnished with all aids of Science, advance his Prospect, if he used but moderate industry, and proceeded regularly; What could there be in any Science, which were either of any use, or any certainty, that could escape him? and other things ought not to stop him; they may be his diversion, but ought not to be his study. I believe there are few Natures but are capable, if not of eminent Accomplishment, yet of such Improvement as may render them considerable and useful enough, if they would apply themselves to the study of Knowledge with any tolerable vigour, or exert their vigour with any regularity and uniformity? 'Tis owing to laziness and wantonness, that the slow and heavy attain not to such Abilities as might suffice to set them off, and to make them show tolerably well: And 'tis to the same that the quick and witty owe their want of all Solidity and Judgment, while they discover

cover only enough to make the World justly condemn them, as wanting to themselves and their Country, being bad Stewards of a naturally rich and improvable Estate, careless and ill Masters of good Parts.

Nor is Constancy less serviceable in the pursuit of Vertue than of Knowledge. Vertue, when acquired, is confessed by all to be easie and delightful, because natural and rational; but to acquire it, this is the difficulty; but 'tis such a one as Constancy and Courage would easily vanquish: 'Tis generally thought there is in most at first some sort of impetus towards good, which if it were constantly cherished, would soon turn into habit and nature; but fits and heats of Religion, broken and interrupted Essays and Attempts, do only keep up so much gust for Vertue, as makes us a little disgust the Enjoyments of Sin, and preserves so much of Conscience as serves to disturb and perplex us. But be it how it will, let us suppose Man infected in his Nature, and what is worse, over-run by vicious habits, yet even then the same care, watchfulness, and discipline that cures a Chronicle Distemper of the Bo-

dy, would heal an habitual Disease of the Mind ; and one may reform and enrich a degenerate Mind with as little pains as it will cost to recover a decayed and ruined Estate.

But let me return to my main Subject, that is, the Conduct of *Civil Business*. Here, I am sure, an uniform constancy and regular vigour is exacted by all ; I have seldom observed Men of great Ability do great things without great diligence and resolution ; I am sure I have seen them miscarry foully, when Persons of lower Talents have succeeded very well : Nay, the truth is, vigour and resolution are such noble Characters, that whoever appears endowed with them, can never himself miscarry, tho' his Designs sometimes may ; he can never be a loser in Honour and Reputation, but generally appears a great Man, even in the most unfortunate Accidents, and makes even ill Success it self attest his sufficiency. But commonly difficulties give way to the diligence and resolution of great Men ; and if to day will not, to morrow will smile upon their Enterprizes ; there are lucky Minutes in Business, when what before had Wind  
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and Tide against it, moves with the Stream, whether will not he then carry his point, who never lets slip the lucky Moment thorough Negligence, and never fails through Cowardise or Laziness to urge and push on his good Success?

But how much soever *Vigour* and *Constancy* be commended, as most serviceable to Success in Business, as one of the greatest Perfections that Man is capable of, and the best Instrument of attaining all others, yet we must not forget that the strength of our Nature is soon broken if it be always strained, and the finest parts are soon tired and dispirited if they be incessantly employed; That Man has a design to carry on far nobler and more important than this of *Civil Business*, and that so far at least the Pleasures of Life are to be mingled with its Toils and Troubles, as to enable us the better to undergo them; Therefore,

*Fourthly*, The Gentleman's Time ought not to be so wholly taken up in Business, as not to leave Vacancies for *Religion, Meditation, Friendship, and Diversion*. They are two extreams fatal to Happiness, to have no Business at all, or so much as leaves no room for Books  
or

or Friends, for *Meditation* or necessary *Diversion*; for this makes Life very barren and very dull, it makes Business meer Drudgery, and places the great Man in a more toilsome condition than the mean One, and makes him wish for the use of his Tenants and Servants. Nor is this the only Evil of an uninterrupted pursuit of worldly Business, but what is worse, it extinguishes all gust of Vertue, all relish of heavenly things, and instead of the Courage and Peace with which Religion inspires Men, it leaves them without any rational Support or Comfort, either consuming with perplexed and anxious Thoughts about the event of things, or hardened into a neglect, if not contempt of Religion, proposing to themselves no other or higher end of Life than the acquitting themselves well in the station they are, and ascribing the issue of Affairs to no other Providence than such as they are daily wont to imploy about them, and to such other Accidents as they have observed them ever and anon subject to.

When I demand a vacant Time for *Religion*, it must not be supposed that I do not look upon Religion as the first  
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and greatest Business of Humane Life, it being in vain to gain the whole World for him who loses his Soul, or to be intent in preserving or advancing the Peace and Welfare of the Publick for him, whose Mind is filled with Disorder and Guilt; I do therefore suppose all the Actions of the Day, so conducted, as to become Instances of Christian Vertue, I suppose Justice and Integrity, Courage and Bounty, Patience and Gentleness, mingling themselves in the discharge of every *Civil Business*. And then the Religion for which I demand some vacant Moments, is that of publick and private Devotion, without which it is impossible for the great Man either to preserve Reputation without, or Peace within. Publick Devotion is not only an Act of Worship due to God, but in a Gentleman a Testimony of the Honour which he has for the Community he is of, and an expression of Charity towards those who are influenced by his Example. Nor is private Devotion less necessary than publick, not only lest publick without private degenerate into Formality, into a meer show without the Power of Godliness; nor yet because every Man's Reputation

putation flows first from his Domesticks, who can have no great veneration for him, who appears to have none for his God, tho' even these Reasons ought not to be contemned, but especially because every Man has particular wants and particular obligations, and none more than the great One, and therefore must offer up to God his particular Petitions and Prayers. I cannot therefore tell how to think that he who does not begin and close the Day with Prayers to God, can believe there is one; he that does not invoke Providence, seems to defie it; and he who sacrificeth not to God, seems to me to sacrifice only to his own Nets.

As to *Meditation*, 'tis so essential a part of *Religion*, and so indispensable a preparative for Devotion, that I should not have placed it here by it self, did I not extend its design something further. *Meditation* is that *Act*, which of all others, does most delight and nourish the Mind, which, of all others, is most fit to raise and to strengthen it. In other *Actions* we seem to move mechanically, in this alone rationally. In all other, our Reason seems confined and fettered by I know not what Prescriptions, Customs, and

and Circumstances; in this alone it seems to enjoy its native freedom and liberty, rambling with an uncontrouled Impetus, and with delight stretching and delating it self. In all other things, the Mind seems to be impressed and moulded by the Matter and Business about which it is conversant; but in this it gives what Forms and Circumstances it pleases to both; in this it has a kind of creative or productive Power, and I know not what sort of despotick Sovereignty. In a word, he who is ignorant of the force of *Meditation*, is a stranger to the truest Pleasure of Humane Life, to the most useful taking and natural act of the Humane Soul. But I forget what I mainly intended, which was to tell you that the use of *Meditation* consists either in Reflection or Preparation, as regarding alike yesterday and to morrow; 'tis highly necessary that he looks back upon his day past, who lies under so many Temptations to waste it, that he whose Actions are of so much greater importance than those of private Men, and fall unavoidably under a more general and severe Censure, do the more carefully scan them over. Nor is Preparation



paration less necessary than Reflection, for this gives order to your Affairs, and forms the Mind into a fit and just *Disposition*; it prevents surprizes, removes difficulties, and gives beauty and steadiness to your whole Conduct.

As to *Friendship* and *Diversiſon*, I ſhall treat of them fully in their proper place, and therefore ſhall ſpeak but a word of them here. 'Tis a hard matter, it may be, for great Men to have ſincere Friends, but this being a Purchase of ſo great a value, deſerves they ſhould lay out all their Art and Intereſt upon it; for beſides the advantage of *Friendſhip* in every Condition that it clears our Notions, corrects our Errors, confirms our Virtues, enlarges our Joys, and leſſens our Troubles, it is to Men in an eminent ſtation more peculiarly neceſſary, both as the Ornament and Support of their Fortune.

As to *Diversiſon*, it ever muſt be ſuch as may conſiſt with the dignity of the Perſon, or the urgency of his Employment, ſuch as may not leſſen his Character, or waſte his Time; ſuch as may reſreſh and recruit Nature, and from which he may return to his Buſineſs with  
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new vigour and new appetite ; and it were very well if Diversions were so wisely contrived, that they might at once delight and improve the Mind : I should therefore think that Physick or Husbandry, the Principles of any curious Mechanick Performances, Musick, Architecture, and such like , might be proper Entertainments of vacant hours : But if the Health of the Body, as well as Pleasure of the Mind be aimed at in *Diversion*, it were well to have always ready some wise Friends, by whose help and conversation, the Time you bestow upon the Health of the Body , may not be utterly lost to the Mind.

I am sensible I have been guilty in this Discourse of the same Fault which all, who write Morals with any Spirit , do generally fall into , that is, proposing a greater Perfection than is commonly attainable, and of forming my Models and Ideas rather by Speculation than the Practise of Mankind ; but this will be easily pardon'd by such as remember that the Copy will ever fall short of the Original, and that men will easily of themselves bend and accommodate the exactest Rule to the Frailties and Imperfections

fections of Humane Life. Nor do I again forget, when I press Gentlemen to the noblest heights of Vertue, that they are exposed to more numerous and more violent sollicitations to Vice than other Men, I know it ; but at the same time, I remember too, that they always pretend to a higher Spirit, and a more refined Education ; that their Vertue always shines with a double lustre, its own, and that of their Fortune ; so that moderate Attainments in them make a greater shew than the more perfect and accomplished in Men of a lower Sphere ; and finally, that those Advantages and Privileges which they enjoy by their Birth and Station, do put them in a better Condition than other Men, to defend their true Liberty, and to pursue those Methods which Reason and Virtue dictate.

CHAP.

## C H A P. III.

*Of the Trading or Negotiating Life.*

*SECT. 1. Rules relating to Success in Trade.*

*First that the Trader be Industrious.*

*Secondly, that he be not above his Profession.*

*SECT. 2. Rules relating to his Religion.*

*First, The Trade must be a lawful one.*

*Secondly, It must be managed with Justice, Truth, and Charity. Thirdly, It must not interfere with Religion.*

*Fourthly, The Trader ought to propose to himself, wise and rational Ends, such are a Competency for himself and Family: The charitable Assistance of others: A timely Retirement or Retreat from the bustle and distractions of too much Business.*

**M**Y later Years have been spent mostly amongst the Trading part of Mankind, and I have received many Obligations from them, and I think myself bound to do them this right, to let  
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the World know, that I have found more *Honour* and *Gratitude*, more *Clearness* and *Integrity* amongst this sort of Men, than I ever could amongst others, whose *Quality* and *Education* raised my *Expectations* higher, it will be therefore no small satisfaction to me, if any *Endeavours* of mine, can render them any considerable *Service*.

There is no Condition of Life free from *Temptations* and *Difficulties*, apt to embroil our *Happiness* and infect our *Innocence*, and therefore neither this of *Traders*; the *Evils* they are subject to may be reduced to two Heads, their *mis*carrying in *Trade*, or in *Religion*. I will therefore begin with such *Rules* as may serve to prevent the former, and then proceed to such as concern the latter.

If we trace the ruine of such as fail or break, back to its *Original*, we shall find it generally to be either *Idleness* or *Pride*. *Idleness*, the Parent of all sottish Vices; *Pride* the Parent of expensive Follies and ruinous Projects. I will therefore lay down these two *Rules* as the Foundations of the *Trader's* *Secular Prosperity*. *First*, That he must be diligent  
and



and Industrious. *Secondly*, That he must not be above his Profession.

1. He must be *Diligent* and *Industrious*. You seem born for *Industry*; and tho' some pretend to be sent into the World only to enjoy a Fortune; 'tis plain you are first to raise one; and tho' there may be some Fortunate men in the World, that seem to thrive rather by Chance than Vertue, and owe more to the Care of others than their own, yet I am sure, in the ordinary Methods of *Providence*, *Diligence* and *Industry* are the High-way to *Wealth* and *Plenty*, *Vertue* and *Sobriety*, to wise and secure Enjoyments. And I know not with what confidence Men can promise themselves the Blessing and Favour of God on any other terms. He has made nothing on purpose to be idle and useles: The heavenly Bodies never cease to yield their Light and Influence, nor the Terrestrial ones their Fruit. We our selves do subsist by a continual Motion; and should our Blood and Spirits grow dull and sluggish, our Life must needs expire with their Activity; *Man is born to labour as the Sparks fly upward*; our Capacities and Endowments destine and urge

us to it, the necessities and wants of this needy beggerly state, in which Nature, how kind soever it was to the golden Age, does not furnish us with any thing, without *Art* and *Industry* exact and demand it, and the Laws of Humane Society oblige us to it; for it is but fit that every one should contribute his shot for the Entertainment of the Publick, and that he should not, like a Droan, be feasted and maintained by the labour and travel of others. And so far, lastly, is Christianity from abrogating this Law of Nature, that it earnestly inforces it, *Let ours learn to maintain good Works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful*; that is, that they be not a shame and burden to themselves and Families, to the Commonwealth or Christian Profession. Propose not then, I address myself here to Apprentices and Beginners; propose not to exempt your selves from that Universal Law of Labour and Travel to which the whole Creation is subjected; you especially who lie under more immediate and particular Obligations to it. 'Tis an unaccountable folly for one, who is to make his Fortune in the World, to apply himself to *Trade*, rather as a  
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*Diversion* than Business, and to design it only as a Support and Fund for Sloth and Luxury: 'Tis madness and phrensie to propose to be Master of his Time ere he be Master of his *Trade*, and to indulge his Pleasures before he has made Provision to defray the Expence of them, and yet this, I doubt, is too too general a practise; whereas would young men consider the matter aright, they would find that they do but prevent their Pleasures by gathering of them before they be ripe, and do but make their Troubles and Vexations endless, by indulging their Ease and Laziness too soon. Contradictious Projects! to propose at once to live idly, and yet to thrive! to live pleasurably, and grow rich! 'Tis true, there are many *Traders*, who live in much Ease and Plenty, and make a very handsome Figure in the World, and 'tis but fit there should be such: *Trade* is the Support and Ornament of Kingdoms, and no Man of sense will any more envy the Man of *Trade* his Wealth, than the Man of the Sword his Honour, or the Man of Letters and Abilities his Places and Preferments: But if I could, I would have Men grow up to all these by La-  
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bour and Industry, by an Apprentiship of Sobriety and Vertue; I would have Enjoyment be the Reward of Merit; I would not have Ease and Pleasure be ravished by the loose and unworthy, but regularly possessed by such as have taken pains to purchase both, and have Sense, Experience, and Vertue enough to enjoy them.

*Secondly*, The *Trader* must not be above his Calling. Pride and Vanity are generally sworn Enemies, both to the Content and Prosperity of Traders, but then it must be remembred some are but lightly tinged, others more thoroughly and deeply died with these Vices; in some they produce only little Comical Affectations, and almost Innocent Excursions; but in others very fatal Disorders and Irregularities. There is no gracefulness in any Motion that is not natural; a Man of low Stature may add something to his Height, but nothing to his Comeliness, by strutting upon Stilts. Nor is there only an ungracefulness, but an uneasiness in all affected Motions; we are all a little purblind and dimighted in this World, and therefore walk more securely in the ways we are acquainted with;

with ; but for my part, when an Error is only Comical, and exposes Men no further than to a little Rallery and Censure, 'tis scarce worth my while to prescribe to it ; and I cannot tell whether it be worth every Man's while to be at the Charge of Correcting a Humour, which if it do a little expose him, does yet please him too ; the Pride and Ambition which I would extirpate, is such a one as I have observed fatal to the *Trades-man's* Fortune and Repose ; such as tempts him to despise and neglect his Trade, or puts him upon Expences which it cannot maintain, or engages him in bold or hazardous Projects ; this is an Error which I would fain reform, and methinks a few sober Reflections should here prevail : What ? Can it be sense to make a show abroad at the Expence of your Content and Peace at home ? What ? is it not much better to be modest, and safe, to be humble and at ease, than to suffer daily anxieties and perplexities, and to have your Mind always upon the rack, how to answer and satisfy the Importunities of Pride and Vanity ? 'Tis worse yet, when a short piece of Pageantry ends in perpetual Infamy, when this impotent Hu-



mor is nourished by Robbery and Injustice, by Fraud and Cheat committed upon Widows and Orphans, Acquaintance and Friends, and the nearest Relations. I must confess, I am amazed to think that any ones Pride should be tickled by a false and fatal Grandure, upheld only by Wrong and Injustice, and resolving in a moment into endelible shame and unretrivable ruin. For my part, I should in this case look upon Bravery, not as the Marks of Greatness, but Ornaments of a Sacrifice; not as the pomp of a Triumph, but a Funeral; and my luscious Morfels, how pleasing soever to my Palate, would be ready to rise and recoil in my Stomach. As to those who seem to scorn their Profession, I have but this to say, Let them find out a more thriving one before they leave the old one, before they desert the Profession they were bred to for its meanness, let them make sure of a more honourable Employment, or else the scorn they load their Trade with, will be want of sense, not greatness of Spirit; a lazy Pride, not a generous Ambition; and if so, I am sure there is no Profession so mean as that of sloth and looseness.

Sect.

SECT. 2. The second sort of Rules are such as concern the *Religion* of the *Trader* or *Artisan*, for 'tis to little purpose that he thrive in his Secular, if he run out in his Christian Calling, for this is but to be fortunate, and yet miserable. Therefore,

*First*, He must be sure that his Calling be lawful.

*Secondly*, That it be carried on with Truth, Justice, and Charity.

*Thirdly*, That his Attendance on the Business of this World, do not extinguish his Concern for a better, and his Trade devour his *Religion*, as *Pharaoh's* lean Kine did the fat ones.

*Fourthly*, That he propose to himself proper and rational Ends of Trading.

*First*, He must be sure that his Calling be lawful; that is, such as is neither forbidden by any Law of God, or the Magistrate, nor does in its own Nature minister to Vice. But that I may not perplex Mens Minds with unnecessary Scruples, and tempt them to doubt of the lawfulness of all *Trades*, that are any way made the Instruments of Sin and Folly, you must know some things minister to sin directly and necessarily, others

thers only accidentally, and not by the immediate Intention of the *Artist* or *Trader*, but the abuse of others. The former sort of Traders are unlawful in themselves, and no pretence can sanctifie the use of them ; he that directly and immediately ministers to a sin, communicates in the guilt of it, as he that purveys for the Lust of others, partakes of the sin of the Adulterer and Fornicator ; but those which Minister not purposely and immediately, but accidentally, are yet in themselves lawful ; nor shall the Trader communicate in those Abuses to which the Lusts and Vanities of others prostitute them : Thus Taverns are not unlawful, because abused by Intemperance, nor are all Shops of Clothing to be shut, because thence People furnish themselves with such things as inflame their Immodesty and Pride ; the Reason is plainly this, because the sin may be separated from the Trade ; that Wine, whose full Draughts are by some made use of to the defacing Reason, and enkindling Lust, may as well refresh the weary and delight the moderate ; those Garments which adorn the Proud and Wanton, may be made use of to add a Lustre to Greatness.

ness. The Inconvenience would be insufferable, if every Profession which did but indirectly and casually administer to Vice, were therefore sinful, the Courts of Justice must be laid aside, because often times the Bar and Bench have contributed to oppress, injure, and rob in form of Law. The Pulpit must be for ever silenced, because Men have sometimes sown the Seeds of Sedition and Slavery from hence. All the *Arts*, either of War or Peace, have sometimes served the Cruelty of the one, and Luxury of the other, and by consequence would be banished out of all Commonwealths. Yet here it must be confessed, that the more or less tendency any Trade hath to the promoting Vice, it is in the same proportion the more or less eligible. And that it imports men, who love their *Peace* and *Happiness* more than gain, not to debauch their Callings themselves, by prostituting them to Extravagances and Exorbitances, and projecting Profit from the Intemperances and Sins, that is, the Ruin of others; for 'tis not sufficient to the Peace and Comfort of a Man's Mind that his Calling be innocent, if his Conduct of it be not so to.

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*Secondly, Trade* ought to be managed with *Truth*, *Justice*, and *Charity*; for without these 'tis only a more cleanly Art of Cheating or Oppression; Sins which I doubt can receive but little excuse or mitigation from the custom and practise of them: Without these *Trade* cannot be regular and easie, nor Gain comfortable and delightful, since no man can have any Confidence in the protection of God, when the Methods of his thriving are such as merit Vengeance, not a Blessing; nor can I see any thing that can betray Men into Lying and Knavery, but the want of true Sense, as well as true Faith, since thô many by undue ways have more suddenly enriched themselves, yet 'tis evident that the Wealth which is more regularly purchased is more pleasant, durable, and lasting; and that honest and equitable Dealing is the surest, if not the speediest way to Wealth. Nor are there, I believe, many Instances of Men, who if they understood their Business, have ever suffered much by their Uprightness and Integrity in Dealing, it being very hard to imagine that a *Trader* should be a loser by those Vertues which advances Credit  
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and Reputation : But however this be, I am not now inquiring after Wealth, but *Happiness*, to the obtainment of which I am very positive that the observation of these Measures, is indispensable, since the contrary must needs pervert the Mind, and intangle Life; and as they extinguish in the Soul all Sparks of *Honour* and Greatness, so must they its Courage and Confidence, Tranquility and Peace, which can result from nothing but the due Moderation of our Affections, and the Conscience of our Integrity.

*Thirdly*, The *Traders* Attendance on his Calling must not discharge him from his attendance on *Religion*. 'Tis true, 'tis commonly said and generally admitted, that the duty of every ones Secular Calling is a part of *Religion*, but this ought to be well understood, that so neither a Veneration for Religion breed a neglect of your Callings, nor an over-fond Opinion of the Merit of Industry in your Calling, as if all Vertue were comprised in it, breed a Contempt of Religion; 'tis fit therefore to put you in mind, that Arts and Trades have not in themselves any direct or immediate tendency, either  
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to the improvement of Reason, or the production of Vertue, they minister to the Necessities of this World, not the Glories of another; nor are they so much the Works of a Rational and Spiritual, as of a Mortal and Indigent Being; from whence it follows, that tho' they are necessary to the present state of things, yet can they deserve to imploy you no longer than either the publick Benefit or private Convenience require it, and that you are then only wisely taken up about these, when neither your Endowments nor Fortunes capacitate you for a Life more immediately and directly serviceable to the purposes of Reason and Revelation; and finally, that the Works of a Secular Profession are then only acceptable Sacrifices to God, when consecrated by wise Principles and Vertues cleaving to and mingling with them. Do not therefore think that a Pretence of Business can Cancel your Obligations to the Duties of Christianity. If a Man could fancy, which I never can, Business and Religion incompatible, 'tis evident which were to be preferred, since if the will of God were so, it is much better to be starved than to be damned: But with-

without carrying the matter so far, 'tis plain that *Virtue* and *Religion*, with a competency, render Men abundantly more happy than *Wealth* can do, if attended with the neglect or contempt of either; 'tis the riches of the Mind makes men great and happy; the ignorant and irreligious can never be either. Let no man therefore think that he suffers any *Damage*, if he be forced to maintain his *Virtue* and *Religion* by the diminution of his *Trade*, tho' I cannot comprehend that there can be a necessity of this; for I have never yet observed any Man so oppressed and over-charged with *Business*, as not to find time for *Pleasure*, when he has pretended he could find none for *Religion*. In a word, the neglect of *Religion* is capable of no excuse, not only because your future, but present happiness depends upon it; *Modesty* or *Moderation* to curb a vain and ambitious thirst of *Wealth*; *Faith* or *Confidence* in the *Providence* of *God*, to restrain you from mean, base, and unlawful Courses; *Self-resignation* to prevent anxiety, and those fears to which the *Uncertainties*, *Changes*, and *Revolutions* of *Times* and *Trades* make Men subject,  
seem

seem to me as necessary to the Peace and Happiness of a *Trader*, as a competent Stock, Industry, or Skill can be to his Worldly Success or Prosperity; and those Men, who allow themselves no time, either for Attendance upon Publick Religion, or Private Meditation, may talk finely of these Vertues by way of Notion and Speculation; It is impossible they should be really possessed of them; *How can he get Wisdom that holdeth the Plough, and that glorieth in the goad that driveth Oxen, and is occupied in their Labours, and whose talk is of Bullocks?* which the Author of *Ecclesiasticus*, by a parity of Reason, extends further to all *Traders* and *Artisans*, who are in like manner wholly taken up in their Art. I could therefore wish that those words of our Saviour, *What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul*, were writ in Capital Letters in the most conspicuous place of the Counting-House, and the Shop, that you might ever and anon be put in mind, that there is one thing more necessary, even than the diligent and prosperous management of your Trade, namely Religion; for to what purpose is it that your Books are well

well kept, that there is order and regularity in the whole Conduct of your Trades, if at the same time your neglected Hearts lye like the Field of the Sluggard, waste and open, and over-grown with Briers and Thorns and Weeds; or like a confused and intangled Stock of an unskilful Trader, which wasts and decays each day? To what purpose is it that you be punctual Dealers towards Men, if you be Bankrupts towards God? To what purpose is it that you have Credit and *Honour* upon the Change, if you be poor and beggarly, shameful and sneaking in your selves within, having your Souls destitute of any true Peace, Wealth, or Courage, and you shift the Accusations and Importunities of Conscience, as much as a wretched Debtor would a severe and inexorable Creditor? Ah! while you pursue the World, forget not that there is a Heaven; and while you make Provision for Time, make some to for Eternity; let your stating your Accompts with Men, put you in mind of clearing your Accompts with God; and let these two things never be out of your thoughts, first, That it is God who gives Man power to get Wealth; and  
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next, That 'tis not a clear Estate, but a clear Soul that makes Man happy, I mean a Soul freed from silly and vile Affections, and enriched with a Knowledge and Love of God and Goodness.

*Fourthly*, The *Trader* must propose to himself proper and rational Ends of *Trading*. For whoever proposes to himself vain and false ones, will entangle his Life in manifold Troubles and Temptations, and lose his *Reason*, *Religion*, and *Tranquility* in the Windings and Mazes of wretched Fancies, and unaccountable Projects. These *Ends* of Trading I take to be these Three: *First*, A competent and honest Support of your Selves and Families. *Secondly*, A charitable Succour and Relief of others. *Thirdly*, A timely Retreat from a Secular Calling to a Contemplative Life.

*First*, A competent and honest Support of your selves and Families. This end is pointed out by the Apostle, *Titus* 3. 14. and called *necessary uses*; i. e. we must design in *Trade* the support of the Necessities, not Lusts of Nature. And were not all *Trades* over-stocked, and consequently the observation superfluous, I should tell you that publick, as well as pri-

private Necessities, were here to be understood. Nor is your Care here limited to your own Necessities only, but those also of your Children and Posterity demand their share in it ; but then, least under this pretence you extend your Desires beyond all Bounds, you are to remember, that in resolving the Measures of this Provision, you are not to take Counsel of your own Ambition, or the wanton Expectations of your Children, that Provision for them is wisest which lays a sufficient Foundation for their Industry to build on, and leaves them under an Obligation to Business and Employment. And is not this enough ? To what purpose should Men toil, cark, and pinch to make their Families rich and great, that is lazy and wanton, to leave behind them an Estate which their own Example proves more than necessary, for most of those that do so, have made little use of it themselves ? Mistake me not, I do not think it unlawful to be rich, or to leave ones Family so ; but I think it foolish and sinful too, to sacrifice the Peace of ones Mind, and the Ease of ones Life, to the Lust of Riches : I think it silly and viti-

ous to raise a Family by meannells and fordidness, or to lay the Foundation of Childrens Greatness in ones own Infamy. In short, 'tis not Wealth, but an inordinate Passion for it which I condemn. Prosperity is the Gift of God, a common Reward of Christian Vertues ; for Christianity is said to *have the Promises of this Life, and that which is to come.* Wealth then may be received, but it must not be designed as your first and chief End. Thus *Fame, Honour, and Power* are great Blessings and Favours of Heaven, but whoever immoderately thirsts after the one or the other, is ambitious and vain glorious. You may receive Temporal good things with Gratitude, and enjoy them with Moderation, but if you doat upon them, you violate the Vow of your Baptism, and virtually renounce your Faith; for would not this be to forget that Heaven were your Kingdom and Country, and Earth the place of your *Exile*, or at best Pilgrimage? This is a Lesson can never be too often inculcated, not only on the account of that violent Opposition 'tis almost every where encountred with, but also the vast Importance 'tis of, to the quiet and contentment

ment of a Trading Life, this one thing is the Philosophy, the Trader should be ever studying, the Wisdom he should be daily pursuing, that is, a true and just Moderation of his Desires of Wealth. Did Man know how to bound his Desires by the Necessities or Conveniences of Humane Life? Could he regulate his Appetites by the modesty and moderation of Christianity, not by custom and fancy? I am confident this one thing alone would rescue him from the far greater part of Evils and Incumbrances which infest Humane Life, Vanity, and Ambition, Envy and Emulation, Wantonness and Fancy, create most of these Difficulties and Necessities which stain the Beauty, disturb the Peace and Order, and destroy the Pleasure of Life. When Mens Desires and Aims are too big for their Callings, they are unavoidably plunged into Discontent and doubtful Projects; and if they sink not finally into Ruin, they cannot be held up but by such an anxious and restless Prosecution of the World, as looks rather like Hurry or Distraction, than *Trade* or Employment. I can therefore never think a *Trades-man* happy, till he has modesty

enough to find content in the Revenue of a moderate and easie Trade ; till he understands what are the Bounds his Nature and his Station sets him ; and tho' he know how to enjoy a great Fortune, does never want one ; has Sense enough to use it, and Vertue enough not to let his Happiness depend upon it.

*Secondly*, A charitable Succour and Relief of others. 'Tis confessed by all, that Men are born, not for themselves only, but for others too ; and God, the Dispenser of Temporal Wealth, commands such as are rich in this World, to be rich in good Works too ; but it is always to be provided, that Justice do first take place, and then Charity. This Direction therefore supposes the *Traders* Accounts to stand fair, it supposes him to have discharged the Duties which he owes to his Relatives and Dependants, or else to have none. I will not insist on the Obligation or Pleasure of Charity ; I will not press you to it by the Interest of your present or future *Happiness* ; for the truth is, to do right to the *Trading* World, there is no rank or order of Men in the Kingdom, that is more sensible of the Duty of Charity, or more inclined  
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and disposed to it, none that give more eminent Proofs of it while living, or leave more glorious Monuments of it behind them. One thing only I will take upon me to recommend to you, that is, the Advice of *Solomon*; *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the Grave whether thou goest*; that is, what ever Good you design to do, do it speedily, and as much as in you lies, be your own Executors. How often are excellent Purposes strangled in the Birth by an unexpected Death? How frequently are they perverted by the corruption and negligence of those to whose inspection they are committed? Besides, this way, you shall reap the Fruit of your own Plantations, you will enjoy the Pleasure and Satisfaction resulting from the Perfection, Beauty, and good Contrivance of the Foundations you have laid, or you will be able to supply the Defects, or correct the Errors of your Model, and prevent those future Miscarriages which such Designs are liable to. Tho' all this be very much, yet it is but the least part of what you will reap from being your selves the Ex-

ecutors of your own Bounty, you will be sure that you dedicate it to Charity, not to Vanity, that you are building Almes-houses for the Living, not Tombs and Pyramids for the Dead; you will escape that common Cheat and Imposture the Rich put upon themselves, while they entangled themselves in Covetousness all their Lives, under pretence of designing mighty things after Death.

*Thirdly*, The *Trades-man* ought to propose to himself a timely Retreat, *i. e.* if the Necessities of this indigent State will give way to it; which seems to me natural to finish Business ere we finish Life; to lay down our Burden ere we tire and fall under the weight of it, and quit troublesome Employments, before our bungling discharge of them proclaim the decay of our parts and strength, and the increase of our Avarice and Ambition: Nay, the very continuance of the same Cares for the World, which looked before like Prudence, will in old Age be reckoned Sin and Folly: To Trade, is but to make Provision for Life; and therefore since common Sense will tell us that we must not be always providing for Life, and never live: 'Tis plain Men ought,  
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if they may, at length break off their Trade, or at least so contract it, that it may be rather Diversion than Travel ; as *Solomon* sends us to the Ants to learn Industry, so might he learn Wisdom too, the Enjoyment of their Treasure in the Winter being no less an Instance of the one, than their Labour in laying it up in the Summer of the other. Besides, in ripe years, the Advice of the Prophet seems to be addressed to every Man, *Set thy House in order, for thou shalt surely dye, and not live ; i. e.* settle your Accompts, settle your Fortune, compose the Differences of your Family, and fix your Children, so that you may be able to discern what course they will steer when you are gone, and to correct any Error they are apt to fall into, while you live, which may otherwise, when you are dead, prove incorrigible and destructive. If these Motives, taken from Decency, Prudence, and Mortality, seem too light, there is another of more weight and moment behind, that is, the consideration of your Eternal Interest. 'Tis highly necessary to leave the World before you be torn from it, and to acquaint yourselves more familiarly with another  
World

World , before you pass into it to make your aboad in it for ever. Certainly it requires some time to prepare the Soul for Death and Judgment ; and that Man will be very unfit for either, who is carried from the Counter to the Grave, and from the Intanglements of Secular Cares to the Tribunal of God. But besides the Benefits which you will find in Retirement, the Prospect and Proposal of it has many in it ; the hopes of a Sabatick year in Life, will ease the weight and travel of those that precede it, and a design of of Retreating from Trade and Business will be apt to induce Men to pass their first years with more Moderation and Abstinence, that they may the sooner provide the means of an easie or honourable Retirement.

These Rules well observed would free the Negotiating Life from all the great Evils and Inconveniences it is subject to. Business, as it was in the time of Innocence, would be, not the Curse, but the Blessing of Mankind ; and Trade would be as easie and innocent , if not as pleasant as *Adam's* Husbandry in his Garden ; for thus Industry would be without Drudgery, and Care without Anxiety ;

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Commerce would be carried on without any mean or ill Artifice, without impatient and tormenting Designs, or tiresome and vexatious Disappointments. What need would there be of Shifts and Equivocations, of Fraud and Circumvention, if a Man had Faith enough to believe that God's Blessing upon his Industry were the only way to grow truly rich, I mean to get, if not so much as he would, yet as much as would be good for him? What Temptation would Man ly under to Bondage and Drudgery, or to Perplexity and Anxiety, if he could contain his Desires within those narrow Bounds which Nature and his Station have prescribed him? What Fears could disquiet the Mind, which were formed into an intire Resignation to and Dependance upon God? Or how could the World insnare that Soul which allots a proper time for Publick Religion, and Private Meditation? In one word, these Rules being followed, Men would not only avoid the common Rocks on which the Happiness and Fortune of the *Trader* generally dashes, but also attain the end of this sort of Active Life, they would get Estates in their younger years, and enjoy them



them in their riper ; nay , no portion of Life would want its proper and seasonable Enjoyments, they would in the midst of Business preserve their Innocence, and when they did retire from it, they would perfect that Religion which they could before but begin , and enrich and adorn and entertain the Soul, which they could but guard and defend before, and scarcely maintain in Life , I mean Spiritual Life.

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## C H A P. IV.

*Of a Contemplative Life.*

*For whom this Chapter is designed ; what kind of Life is to be understood by a Contemplative one. Sect. 1. The Ends or Reasons warranting the Choice of such a Life ; First , Enjoyment ; Secondly , Self-preservation from the Assaults of Temptation ; Thirdly, The better Serving the World ; Fourthly , A more entire Dedication of ones self to God. Sect. 2. The Conditions, or Qualifications necessary to a Contemplative Life ; First, A Plentiful Fortune ; Secondly, A peaceable and humble Disposition ; Thirdly, A good Understanding. Sect. 3. The Regulation of a Contemplative Life ; with respect, First, To Time ; Secondly, To Place ; Thirdly, To the Exercise or Employment of a retired Life. The Conclusion, containing the Pleasure and Happiness of a Contemplative Life.*

**T**H E first thing that offered it self to my thoughts, taking a view of this Subject, was, the Collegiate Life of Scho-

Scholars in the Universities ; but besides that here they do not so much design to retire from the World , as to prepare themselves for it ; I had reason to think, whatever Service I could propose to do the Publick by any Advice I could here offer, my Zeal would never be able to atone my Presumption , since these Seminaries of Learning, are under the Conduct and Direction of the Ablest, not of this Age only, but of those passed : I do not therefore Calculate this Discourse for these, but for Persons of another Education, and under no Direction but their own ; for such, who make their retreat from the World, tired, and sated with it ; for such, whose Inclination or Fortune casts them upon a quiet, private, and unactive Life ; To these, I offer myself a Companion ; I would enter with them into their Privacies, and assist them to pass their Hours with true Pleasure and Innocence ; I would inspire them, if I could, with wise and excellent Thoughts ; I would ingage them in the most necessary and most delightful Business of Humane Life, and guard them against those Evils and Follies which are apt to insinuate themselves into the most Solitary Life.

I must here in the next place repeat an Observation which I think I have some where before made, That the Life of Man must neither be wholly Contemplative, nor wholly Active ; for as Action and Business, without any Meditation, is apt to alienate the Mind from God and Vertue; to corrupt all that is great and generous, and truly wise in it, and wed it wholly to the World ; so I doubt a Life spent wholly in Contemplation, without any mixture of Action, will prove fruitless and unprofitable; and Men condemned to utter Solitude, like the Trees and Shrubs of the Wilderness, would grow wild and savage, luxuriant in Leaves, but their Fruit, if they brought forth any, sower and small. They forget the Nature and the Duty of Man, and talk not Seraphically, but Fantastically; whoever perswade him to give up himself intirely to Contemplation; Man is yet a mixt and compound Being, when he becomes all Spirit, let him be all thought: He is yet a Citizen of this World, tho he be destined for another; let him not forget that there are Vertues becoming him as such, let him live by intuition, when he comes into the perfect Light, and

and enters into the beatifick Presence, let him live by Raptures, when he is come into a World where Wants and Frailities, Paines and Evils cannot enter: In the mean time, let Man content himself with Humane Vertue, and in this low probationary State, not dream of the Flights which only Angels take; having thus taken care, first to raise no expectation in my Reader, which might afterwards be frustrated; and next prevented his being betrayed into any Extravagance by projecting a more abstracted Life, than the Nature of Man and the World will admit, I will now proceed to Discourse of these three things:

*First, The Reasons and Ends of a Contemplative Life.*

*Secondly, The Necessary Qualifications for it. And,*

*Thirdly, The due Regulations of it.*

*First, Of the Reasons, &c.* Some propose to themselves Ease and Enjoyment, as the great end and design of their Retirement; now thô this be a mean and low Project, little becoming the Excellence of our Christian Profession, yet I cannot but acknowledge, that it seems  
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to me an absurd and irrational thing, to wear out Life in a continual hurry or drudgery; and I cannot but think it reasonable, that Men should one time or other allow ease to the Body, and quiet to the Mind; should set both free from their Servitude to the World, and enjoy the Wealth which they have got together, and eat the Fruit of their Travel and Care: But tho' this be true, yet if Men do quit the Business, only to give themselves up to the Pleasures of the World; if they exchange their Anxiety and Toil for Luxury and Sensuality, and instead of being industrious, plodding, and thriving Traders, become idle, or which is worse, loose and riotous Country Gentlemen; this I must confess is but a miserable Change, this is but to prophane Retirement, abuse Plenty, and waste that precious time which God has made them Masters of; this, in a word, is not for a Man to quit his slavery, but to exchange his Masters; for as to the interest of another Life, and the true end of this, 'tis much the same thing, whether a Man be a Servant to Pleasure and Sloth, or to Covetousness and Ambition. The sum of this Matter is plainly this, 'tis undoubt-

edly lawful for such as have been long toiled in the pursuit of the World, to retire and enjoy themselves and their Friends ; nay further, I count them happy, who seem born not to struggle and contend with the World, but to enjoy it ; but if by Enjoyment be here understood, only the gratification of the Humour by outward, tho' innocent Pleasures, I must affirm, That this is too mean, too low, to be the chief End, either of the ones Entrance into the World, or the others Retreat from it : But if, which is worse, by *Enjoyment* be here meant growing fat with good Eating and Drinking, or as it were rank and rotten through Ease and Sloth, I deny this to be the *Enjoyment* of a Man, much less of a Philosopher or Christian : The *Enjoyment* of a private Life or Philosophical Recess, ought to consist in Peace and Order, in Harmony and Exaltation, in a holy Calm and Serenity, in which, as in a clear day, from the top of some advantageous height, we *Enjoy* an enlarged and delightful Prospect ; when we look backwards, we behold a wide Sea covered with a vast number of all sorts of Vessels, tossed up and down at the mercy of Winds and Waves,

Waves, some few seem to make out with a steady Course, but are immediately encountered with cross Winds and Storms, a very few indeed to return in triumph homewards, and of these some miscar-rying almost in sight of Port; of all the rest, a great part, with much toil and difficulty, do scarcely live in stress of Seas and Weather, but the far greater part do suffer wrack, and scatter their miserable Ruins on every Coast. But when we look forward, we discover a rich and secure Country, thinly inhabited indeed, but filled with all the Marks of Joy and Victory. But whither will my Imagination lead me; the Enjoyment of the retired, is to consist in the pleasant Reflections they make on their Escape out of a tempestuous World, in the Commerce and Entercourse they maintain with that above; in a calm and leisurely survey of all the various and wonderful Works of God, the Worlds of Grace and Nature; and lastly, in a very intimate and familiar Acquaintance with themselves, and the daily habitual practise of pleasing and perfect Vertues.

*Secondly*, One true end of *Retirement* may be Self-defence, or Preservation.

An Active Life is a state of War, and the World is an Hostile Country, Snares and Ambushes are laid every where for us, and ever and anon Temptations, worldly and fleshly Lusts, which *St. Peter* tells us do war against the Soul, do endeavour either to court and betray us, or to drive and force us into death and ruin; therefore, if we be conscious to our selves of our own weakness, we have reason not to expose our selves to dangers, which we have not courage nor strength enough to vanquish; and to choose Retirement not as a state of Perfection, but Safety, the Measures of Grace, the Strengths of Reason, and the Inclinations of Nature, are very different in different Men; whoever therefore, upon the best survey he can make of his own Forces, and after some, not insincere Trials, finds himself no Match for the World, unable to countermine its Policies, and oppose its Power, such a one, if he can, may, nay, I believe ought retire from the World, as from the face of a too potent Enemy; for thô War be fuller of Glory, Peace is of Security; and thô an active and busie Life be in its self more serviceable to the good of Mankind, and the honour

honour of God, yet in this case, a poor Christian may prefer a Contemplative one as the securer; and this is not to decline the Service of God and Man, but Sin and Danger; 'tis not to prefer Ease and Security before Spiritual Industry and Glory, but before a rash Presumption, and a fatal Defeat or Overthrow.

*Thirdly*, Another End of Retirement may be, to render us more beneficial to the World. The different Talents of different Persons do seem to mark them out, and destine them to different sorts of Life; there are, if I may so speak, Active and Contemplative Gifts, and 'tis a great Felicity for any one to be able to know himself so well, as to discern what the God of Nature has designed him for. Some, who are a disgrace to a publick Station, would be an Ornament to a private one; many who act but awkwardly, think and meditate very wisely and accurately; and some, who do but expose themselves in Business, would pass very well in Retirement, and prove excellent Examples of Innocence and Vertue, and wonderfully oblige by their good Nature, Sweetness, and Charity, all such as should live within the



reach of their Influence. None are wont more earnestly to covet Retirement, than such who are naturally addicted to Learning; Men too plain, or too great for a crafty add subtle World, too generous, tender, and easie for a bustling, vexatious and stingy one; these are the Men, who when they are Masters of their wishes, seem more particularly obliged to dedicate themselves to some eminent Service of the Publick; these must not bury their Talents, but righten them in quiet and retirement, like Guardian-Angels, they should procure the honour and happiness of the Palaces which they seldom or never appear to, and withdrawing only, not to avoid the Service, but the Foolery of the World, they must ever maintain an Active Charity and Compassion for those they leave behind caught and entangled in it, and must out of gratitude travel to obtain some Blessing or other upon that Government, to whose Protection they owe the Comforts and Security of their Retreat. But tho this Direction do more immediately concern such as these, that is, Men of Parts, yet sure there are none utterly exempt from this Obligation of procuring the Publick Good

Good in their Proportion ; who is there so destitute of the Gifts of Grace, Nature, or Fortune, as to have no Mite to cast into the Publick Treasury ? He that dares not pretend to attempt the enlightning or reforming the World, can yet advise and comfort his ignorant or afflicted Neighbour ; he who cannot give Advice at all, may yet give Alms, which very often is as solid and substantial a benefit ; and he that cannot do this, can yet never be excused from Offering up daily Prayers for the Peace and Welfare of his Country , for the Preservation and Edification of the Church, for the Conversion of Sinners, &c. nay he may proceed to what Particularities he shall see fit or necessary, both in his Petitions and Thanksgivings, and from these Intercessions both the Publick and Private, may, for ought I know, reap more true and valuable Benefit, than from the Works and Labours of the Learned, or from the Alms and Bounty of the Rich. To conclude , he that leads the most private and sequestred Life, and is too of the poorest Endowments, can yet never be supposed utterly incapable of rendring any the least Service to others, since the single Ex-

ample of Vertue and Integrity, and the warmth of a pious and edifying Conversation is of the greatest use. Some way or other therefore the most solitary Life ought to serve the Publick, that so Retirement may not minister to Wantonness and Sloth, but Piety and Vertue, and the World may not lose a Member, but enjoy its Service in its proper place, and most effectual manner.

*Fourthly,* The main End of Retirement from the World should be, I think, to dedicate our selves more intirely to God. The Philosopher thought indeed a Contemplative Life the most happy one, but thought it too a Blessing too great for Mortal Man, too high for this frail Nature, and above the state and condition of this World; he had a great deal of Reason on his side, yet must we press on towards that perfection which we cannot attain; and it is a sufficient Reason for our doing so, that we shall thus approach nearer to it; tho' therefore what some Monkish Authors have writ of a Solitary Life, equalling almost the Duties and Pleasures of it, to those of an Angelical one, tho' this, I say, may seem rather holy Romance and Enthusiasm, than  
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grave and sound Doctrine, yet sure it cannot be denied, but that the Prophets, the *Nazarites*, and the *Essens* amongst the *Jews*, and many devout and excellent Persons amongst the Christians, as well in the purest as corruptest Ages of the Church, have chose and coveted Solitude and Desarts, I mean not uninhabited Places, for that if it were so, was an Excess and Extravagance, but calm and silent Retreats from the noise and impertinance, from the hurry and distraction of much Business and much Acquaintance; and since they did so, their Examples seems to teach us, That this State may be made eminently useful to our own good, and God's glory; here a Man seems to have little else to do, but to praise God and improve himself, to expiate the Errors of his past Life, and to correct and subdue whatever he feels amiss in himself at present, to perfect and augment his Graces, and to dress and adorn his Soul for the Festival Solemnities and Triumph of another World: Now he seems to have nothing to do but to begin his *Hallelujahs*, to advance into the Borders and Confines of Heaven by Faith and Devotion, and from the heights  
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of Meditation, to survey as from the next advantageous Hill, the Riches and the Pleasures of that *Canaan* which he shall in a moment enter into ; and by this method, no doubt of it, as he shall enlarge his Appetite and Capacity of Happiness, so shall he enlarge his share in it ; by this method he shall adorn Religion , and represent it to the World as most lovely and most useful ; he shall experiment it to be unspeakably delightful in it self ; he shall render the World more easie to him, and Heaven more desirable ; and when he comes to the Banks of *Jordan*, that is, of Death, which parts this World from the other, he shall find the Streams of it divided to make him way ; that is, the Troubles and Terrors of it dissipated, and he shall pass through it full of humble Gratitude for the Blessings of this past Life, and ravishing Hopes and Desires of those of the future.

These are the proper and rational Ends of withdrawing from the World , tho I am not ignorant that there may be several other Inducements to it ; such are the digesting a Discontent or Disgrace , the curing some Passion which would be otherwise nourished by conversing with  
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its Object, and the meer escaping from the Troubles and Noise of the World ; and as some Men are forced out of their Retreats into the World, not without great Service to the Publick, so are there others, who if they had sense enough to know themselves, or modesty enough to hear the Advice of their Friends, should betake themselves to a private Life , to prevent the Mischiefs in which they are like to involve themselves and others in a Publick one ; such are Men of bold and enterprizing Tempers, without Sufficiency, Men of Zeal and Activity , without Understanding. But I designed not here so much to consider what might induce Men to embrace a quiet silent Life , as what Ends they were to propose to themselves when they were in it, which having done, I will pass on to the second thing.

Sect. 2. The Qualifications which fit Men for a Retired Life ; and these are, I think, Three.

*First*, A plentiful, or at least, competent Fortune.

*Secondly* , A mild and humble Disposition, or at least, a quiet and composed Mind.

*Thirdly*,

*Thirdly, A good Understanding.*

*First, A plentiful Fortune.* 'Tis true, that a Competency is sufficient to render a retired Life easie, and when any one betakes himself to it as a Refuge or Sanctuary, against the Hostilities and Persecution of Temptations, this is abundantly enough; but where a Contemplative Life is a matter of Choice, not Necessity, a plentiful Fortune is of great use, and a great Ornament; it will make the Example of a Man's Vertue shine with a clearer Lustre and greater Authority; it will enable him to do many Works of Charity, which shall have much delight in them, without Toil or Disturbance; it will furnish him with all useful means of Publick and Private Devotion, and with whatever is necessary to enable him to pass his time both delightfully and rationally. I think I have expressed my thoughts clearly; but to prevent all mistakes, I will add, by a plentiful Fortune I do not mean a great one, this is more commonly burdensome, than useful to a private Life, and more apt to incumber it, than promote the true Ends of it. In my Retirement, I would have decency  
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and order, but not state and show ; I would have comely Plenty , but not a toilsom Affluence ; for the Business of Solitude is to raise the Mind, not to entangle and enslave it : But the measures of this Wealth must finally be determined by every Man's own Bosom ; for it ought to be proportioned to the Temper and Genius, to the Capacities and Abilities of the Person who retires, and to the more immediate Design and Ends of his Retirement ; and after all, there is no greater stress to be laid upon this Qualification than this, It is convenient , but not essential ; tho' a wise Man may make an excellent use of it , it is not so absolutely and indispensably necessary , but that he may be happy without it, both in Publick and Private. For,

*Secondly,* The Pleasure and Success of Retirement depends much more upon a Man's Temper and Genius, that it be calm and quiet, that it be meek and humble ; and if it be not naturally so, it must be made so ; for a proud and ambitious , a restless and turbulent Person, will in vain seek for that rest and repose in sequestering himself from the World, which is to be found only in the subduing his Passions ;  
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and reforming his Nature: He that is fond of Opinion and Esteem, he that is at the disposal of Fancy and Humor, and is not able to shake off the Yoak of Fashions and Customs, will find much to torment him, but nothing to improve or delight him in his Retirement: But on the other hand, the meek and humble Man will find his Garden a Paradise, and his Solitude a conversing with God and Heaven; he will enjoy the present without any further Prospect or Ambition; Meditate without any Distraction; Worship and Praise God, as if he had no other Business, or Design, and do all the Good he can in his little Sphere, as if it were the only Pleasure and Entertainment of the Life he had chose. 'Tis one of the great Priviledges of Retirement, to be able to neglect fantastick and imaginary Good, and pursue after that only which is solid and substantial; to be the Masters of our own Time and Actions, and to model Life by our own Reason and Inclinations, not the Fancies and Humors of others. 'Tis the great Advantage of Retirement, that a Man has all the Pleasure his Soul desires within his own reach, that all of the World that is grateful to him,

him, is to be found within the verge of his private Abode ; he therefore whose Mind gads abroad, and hankers after Foreign Pleasures, who is tainted with Envy or Emulation ; who hunts after Esteem, and is discomposed by the Fancy and Censures of others, muddies the pure Stream, corrupts and adulterates the true tast and relish of a retired Life ; this therefore ought to be the first endeavour of him who seeks Happiness in a retreat ; to free his Mind from all those busie or ambitious Passions, which will disturb his Repose, and corrupt his Taste, and to reduce it to its native Purity and Simplicity, in which it will be able to relish the Blessing of true Liberty, of easie and innocent Pleasures, of true and artless Friendship, of regular and undisturbed Devotion, and finally, of calm and elevated Meditation.

*Thirdly,* A good Understanding is a necessary Qualification for Retirement. It requires no little Prudence to guard our selves against those Evils or Impertinences which will be apt to invade, or insinuate themselves into our Solitude ; decently to decline Business, Acquaintance, Cerimonies, Diversions, I mean  
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superfluous and unnecessary, which will rob us of our Time and Liberty, and obstruct us in all the wise Ends we propose to our selves, is a matter of no ordinary dexterity and address. Nor does it require less Understanding to preserve the Peace and Order of a private Family, and yet 'tis in vain to shun the infection that is abroad, if more fatal and stubborn Maledies reign at home. Nay further, the Family of the Contemplative Man, ought not only to give him no Disturbances, but if possible, it ought to be moulded and compos'd to his own Humor, and animated by inclinations somewhat at least a kin to his. Nay, after all, let us suppose the Man so intirely sequestered, as to be utterly disengaged from all other Interests but his own, to have no dependance upon any others motion, to have none but himself to regard, no other to please, no other to improve, even here I cannot tell whether so absolute a Liberty do not need the greater Wisdom to moderate and govern it, and whether it do not require a larger Capacity to find a proper and wise Employment, for one whose Fortune has tied him to none at all; they are no ordinary

dinary Endowments which will enable one loose and free from all Business, to spend his time profitably and pleasantly; and yet if he do not, he will be liable to the worst of Evils; he will dissolve and putrifie in sloth, or else turn sower and savage, churlish and brutish, through ignorance, disgust, and discontent; nauseated with a Life that affords him nothing new, nothing taking: But the Book of Nature lies open to him! 'tis true, but he cannot read it; 'tis not every vulgar eye that discerns the delicate touches of a skilful Pencil, the curious and subtle mixtures of Light and Shade in a well drawn Piece; 'tis not every Spectator can judge of the beauty, strength, and convenience of a well contrived Building. But his Cabinet may be well furnished 'tis true, but if the Man have nothing Bookish in him, if he have no Genius for Eloquence, no Ear for the Musick of Wit and Fancy, no Judgment for History, no Comprehension for Arts or Sciences, what is a Cabinet to him, tho' furnished ever so well, either for use or rarity, 'tis only fit to be shown, or to sleep in, for after all the cost and skill laid out upon it, the Couch is the best

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Furniture in it. But there is Friendship ! there is ; the Name indeed there is , but the Thing is too Divine ; a low and groveling Soul , a dull and impenetrable Temper cannot discern the Charms , nor taste the Sweets of Friendship ; what is that Familiarity which is incapable of Tenderness or Passion ? what is that Conversation which is incapable of variety , or depth , of Wit , or Judgment ? But there is Religion , there is Devotion , a boundless Field of Profit and Delight ! 'tis true ; and the Principles of this are plain and strong , able to move the Man of lowest Capacity to decline Evil , follow his Calling , and do good in proportion to his Sense and Ability ; but as to Seraphick Contemplative Religion , for this to be the Life and Business of Man , it requires a vast Capacity , raised and refined Notion , and little less than real Enthusiasm ; I mean a truly Divine Impetus or Ardour impressed or inkindled in the Soul , by the exuberant influxes of the blessed Spirit. In a word , he who in his Retreat is intirely Master of himself and Time , had need of Talents to employ and divert him to find him Business and Pleasure , and to enable him to reap benefit

benefit from the one, and to preserve his Innocence in the other ; and without this degree of Understanding , a solitary Life must be very dull and barren ; nor can I think of any Cure for this, but to increase a Man's Task and Business, in proportion to the defect of his Understanding, that so Employment may fill those Vacuities which Contemplation never can. This puts me in mind to advance on to the third thing proposed.

Sect. 3. The Regulations of a Contemplative Life, which regards either, *First*, The Time ; *Secondly*, The Place ; or, *Thirdly*, The Exercise and Employment of Retirement.

*First*, As to Time. Tho Contemplation, more or less, ought to enter into every part of our Lives , yet the most seasonable time of giving our selves more intirely up to it, is the Evening of Life, the Declension of our Age ; we have then had our fill of the World , and shall not be like to hanker after it ; we have seen the emptiness of it, and shall be more like to fix upon solid Good ; we shall value our Peace and Calm the more, after we have been long tossed by Storms ; besides, we shall set our selves more seri-

ously to the Meditation of Death and Judgment, when we are come within Ken of them, and shall be apt to examine the intrinsick good and evil of things with more impartiality, when the Heats of Youth, and the Boilings of our Passions are cooled and slak'd: And finally, this is a seasonable time to correct and repair the Errors of the past Life, and to state our Accounts for the last Audit. But tho' I thus prefer Age, as most fit for a retired Life, I do not dissuade the younger from it, provided it be Vertue, not Softness, the love of another World, not a cowardly declining the Duties of this, which prompts them to it; otherwise, it were sure much better that the younger sort, through the vigorous season of Life, should be engaged and taken up by Business; nay, should contend even with the Cares, Troubles, and Difficulties of the World, rather than make choice of Retirement to be the Scene of a voluptuous, lazy, and unprofitable Life; for in the one case something is every day learnt, something done, in the other nothing; in the one, the Man lives neither dishonourable to himself, nor unuseful to his Country; but  
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in the other, he rots and consumes away ingloriously and unprofitably.

*Secondly*, As to Place. Solitude has ever been deemed a Friend to Meditation, and a Retirement from the World very serviceable to a Conversation with Heaven: And this Opinion is much strengthened by the practise of the *Nazerites*, Prophets, and devout Persons in the best times. 'Tis remarked of *Isaac*, that when he would meditate, he went out into the Field; and when *Moses* met God, it was in the Desert. Without question, a private Retreat affords us many Conveniences and Advantages to a Contemplative Life; leisure and silence settle and compose the Thoughts, and the Mind augments its strength and vigour by rest, complacency, and collection within it self; and in this state of Serenity it is most fit to reflect upon it self, or enter into a survey of the Rest and Peace of glorified Spirits, and examine the Grounds of its own hopes; by Retirement we at least in a great measure free and disengage our selves from those things which are apt either to soften or disturb us, and to breed in us either Vanity or Vexation. And I cannot tell, but the

fineness of Air, the openness of Prospect, the Regularity and Moderation of Diet, Rest, and Exercise, may have that influence upon our Bodies, as to dispose and prepare them to be the fitter Instruments of the Mind ; to all this we may add, that the variety, beauty, and use of all the Works of Nature, do insensibly and almost unawares raise in us an admiration of the Divine Wisdom, and invite us to adore his Power and Goodness. But all this notwithstanding , it must ever be remembred, that Retirement does not so much consist in Solitude of Place, as in freedom from Secular Business and Troubles, from the Allurements, Distractions, and Vexations of the World ; if if we put these off, we may find Retirement enough in the most populous City, but if we carry these with us into the Country, we shall reap little benefit from change of Place or Air ; and under the Name of Retirement, we shall be persecuted with all the Evils and Mischiefs with which Vanity, Disorder , and Distraction are wont to disquiet an active and busie Life : This being rightly understood, the Nature of our Circumstances ought to govern us in choosing the  
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Place of our Retreat, but especially a regard to such Duties, wherein we propose to spend the bigger portion of our Time.

*Thirdly*, The Exercise and Employment of a Contemplative Life is now to be considered: And here these several things offer themselves immediately to my Thoughts, *Business*, *Diversions*, *Friendship*, *Meditation*, as comprizing all the several Acts of a Contemplative Life, and measuring out the several Periods of the Ascetick's time.

*First, Of Business.* I have before said, That a Life of meer Contemplation, is above the nature and state of Man; and when I consider how few are capable of any long or regular Contemplations, I am apt to think, that the wisest way for most is, not to discharge and free themselves from all Temporal Engagements, but only from such as will disturb the Peace and Order of a retired Life; and yet I could wish, that their growth and improvement in Knowledge and Goodness, might be their main Business and Employment. So many indeed are our Errours and Sins, so frail, tender, and weak our Vertue, that to correct the one,

and confirm the other, is Business enough, and may of it self easily take up the whole of Life : If we pursue diligently all the Methods of the Improvement and Advancement of Life, we shall need no other Arts or Employments to spend or divert our time ; he that besides a constant attendance upon Publick Devotion, Sacraments, and Sermons, bestows some time each day on bewailing his Sins, and blessing God for his Mercies ; on examining his present state, and establishing his future hopes ; he that spends each day but a few Thoughts on God and Jesus Christ his Redeemer, on the vanity and uncertainty of all things in this World, but Religion and Vertue, or finally on Death and Judgment, and withal on the various Arts by which Sin and Folly is wont to cheat or surprize him, to tempt or deceive him, will, I believe, find but few hours to waste ; especially when 'tis considered how much Time the Necessities of Nature, and the Indispensible Duties we owe to some Relatives or other, take up. And this calls to my mind the Vigilance and Industry we owe to the Happiness of others, as well as to our own: There are a great many Offices of Charity

rity, to which Humanity and our Christian Profession (if we understand the nature of Church-Membership) do oblige us; the Peace of the Neighbourhood, the Preservation of Laws, the promoting Publick Piety, the Instruction of the Ignorant, the Relief of the Needy, the Comfort of the Afflicted, the Protection of the Injured; these, and such like Occasions, will never be wanting to rouse our Zeal, and imploy our Charity; and these are Works which will turn to as good, if not a better account in the Life to come, than Solitary Vertue: And certainly they turn to excellent account in this; for when the retired Man doth cultivate the Neighbourhood, and sow it with his Charity, he seems but to plant and water his own Garden, or plough and sow his own Fields; and while he renders them more rich, gay, and fertile, himself reaps the Pleasure and the Profit, enjoys the Prospect, and feasts on the Fruit: Just so it is in this piece of Spiritual Husbandry; he who imparts Wisdom and Instruction to another, purifies and exalts his own Mind; he that scatters the Expressions of his Bounty and Charity, feels his Soul warm and delighted,



ed, and finds his Vertue and his Joy enlarged ; for 'tis with Grace as 'tis with Nature, the Exercise of each breeds both strength and pleasure ; to all which you may add, That no Man consults more effectually the Interest and the Pleasure of his Retirement, than he who most zealously studies the Support and Improvement of his Neighbourhood. Here's Business enough, and I could point out to you more.

But why should I take pains to contrive and cut out Work for the Contemplative Man ? Peradventure I should do him more Service, could I teach him an Art to decline it. Alas ! Business will hunt and follow us, it will intrude and press upon us, whether we will or no ; and such is the natural Vanity, such the Curiosity of our Minds, that we are too often apt to make our selves work, and to intangle our selves in a thousand Trifles and Impertinences ; I doubt therefore that it is here very needful, to put those I am discoursing to in mind, to take care, that whilst they shun the Trouble and Business of the World, they suffer not themselves to be entangled in Impertinences of their own creating ; that they

they mind and pursue the main End, that is, growth and increase in Vertue, and be at all times ready to sacrifice Trifles and Matters of less Moment to this their great Interest, least Fancy and Humour, or something worse, usurp the place of Reason, as it does too often happen, in a Life of absolute and uncontrollable Liberty.

*Secondly, Diversion.* This is not to be excluded from a Solitary Life; they adulterate Religion, who make it sower or melancholy, it condemns nothing but what infects the purity, or breaks the force and vigour of the Mind; we are not immortal and incorruptible Beings, the Soul and Body both (for it were vain to contradict universal Experience) sink under the weight of constant Labour, it will be hard, if not impossible, to preserve the vigour of the Mind, if we destroy the health of the Body. God in another World designs us Spiritual Bodies, as the most proper Instruments of these active Minds, let us not therefore make them here crasie and sickly; I would never have my Religion be the effect of a broken Body, but an inlightned Mind; I would never have it proceed from dis-

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content conceived against this World, but from the firm belief, love, and admiration of a better ; whatever therefore Diversion recreates my Mind without enslaving it, whatever repairs my Body without impairing my Vertue, I embrace with open Arms, I'll not only taste but drink my fill of Pleasure, if it exalt not, debase my Nature, I shall never complain that my Mind is too chearful, or my Body too vigorous. Let the Priests of *Baal* cut themselves with Knives and Lancets, I'll keep my Blood and Spirits if I can, to support my Zeal, and enrich my Fancy ; and in one word, to serve God with Life. No body can here mistake me, unless they do it wilfully, and therefore 'tis not worth the while to anticipate any wild Objections ; I patronize not the Lust but the Vigour of the Body ; I invite not to the sensuality of a polluted Fancy, but to the vertuous recreation of the Mind : And while I think not a dejected and discontented Mind, and a decayed Body, the most acceptable Sacrifice to God, I do by no means deny a penitent contrite Spirit, a purified and obsequious Body to be so.

*Thirdly,*

*Thirdly*, As to *Friendship*. The distinction between Acquaintance and Friends is ever good, but never more proper or necessary than here; for Retirement, as it signifies sequestering our selves from Company, is to be understood with discretion; and the plain Rule here, as in all other Cases, is to avoid Extreams, as a Croud, so Solitariness seems not to minister, either to the Vertue or Improvement of the Mind, or to the Peace and Calm of Life; the one robs us of our Time, the other leaves us so much, that to very many it becomes burdensome; the one makes us, vain, trifling, or it may be worse sensual, the other dull and slow, or it may be morose and savage. The skill of a Contemplative Man, is not to decline all Company, but provide himself of good. The Prophets themselves had their Colledges; and they in the first Times, who left the Cities for the Desert, did yet associate themselves with one another. Indeed, as I take it, in this kind of Life we have the fullest Enjoyment, and the best Service of our Friends, the purest Delight, and the truest Edification, being best promoted in the Contemplative Life by Friendship; and therefore

fore Friendship is no more to be banished from the Gardens and Retirements of the Contemplative, than from the Tables and Enjoyments of the Active.

*Fourthly, Devotion.* Participation of the Lord's Supper, and Meditation, are the remaining parts of the Ascetick Life, and indeed these ought to be his great Employment. A Life in the World may be a Life of Business, but a retired one ought to be a Life of Prayer, Eucharist, and Meditation: Nor indeed can it well be otherwise, unless we have proposed to ourselves some false Ends of Retirement; for these are not only the Duties, but the Pleasures of the Ascetick Life; in these the Soul's enlightned, enlarged, raised, ravished; in these it sores up to Heaven, and looks down upon Earth; in these it possesses Stability and Security, Peace and Rest, in the midst of a frail instable Nature, and a restless and tumultuous World; in these all the Passions of the Soul are exercised with a most tender sensible delight, sorrow, fear, or reverence; Hate and Indignation, do here express themselves to the height, not only without any disorder or torture, but also with great contentment and satisfaction



faction of our Nature ; Love, Hope, Joy reign here without either Check or Satiety. But I forget that these Subjects are so rich and inexhaustible, they would engage me endlessly ; I forget that they have been treated of so often and so excellently ; I will therefore contract my Sails, and yet I think I have said nothing of them, but as they have a particular aspect upon the Subject of this Chapter, and I cannot pass over Meditation without making some few Reflections upon it : I know 'tis a worn Subject, and therefore, that I may the more easily find Pardon, I'll take care that this superfluous Impertinence, if it be one, shall be a very short one. I will therefore take the liberty to crowd my Thoughts without Method together, lest Order and Connection should take up more Paper than the Things themselves. A good beginning is more than half the Work, is a Proverb no where truer than here ; for Meditation will be like to end very unprofitably, if we enter not upon it in a good Disposition and devout Frame, and if we do, it seldom succeeds ill.

The Soul therefore ought to be sedate, calm, untouched by any worldly Concern,

cern, pure and unsullied by any Carnal Image, filled with the desire of Spiritual Influence, possessed with the awe of the Divine Majesty.

Yet may sudden and extraordinary Acts of Meditation be ingrafted upon the Stock of our Natural Passions, however first raised: Thus a troubled Mind, betaking it self to reflect upon the Vanity of the World, or upon the Errors of Life and Corruption of Nature, may enlarge it self in a great many very fine, affecting, and edifying Thoughts, till the Storm dissolve into a soft and fruitful Shower. Thus the Mind, a little gay with satisfaction or joy, will easily overflow into Hallelujahs, if it enter into the Meditation of the Joys of Heaven, the Love and Beauty of God, the Triumphs of the Resurrection, &c.

In all Meditation we ought to have more regard to Edification than Learning, to Charity than Knowledge, to devout Passions, than Fancy or Curiosity.

Let none despise pious Heats and Transports, because these short Passions, often repeated, will grow into habitual Holiness, and steady Devotion.

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Those Arguments which we find most effectual to the repressing an inordinate Affection, or to the cherishing a weak and pining Vertue, are to be often ruminated ; not only that they may be always ready, but also because they are generally more successful than others, which may yet be in themselves of greater strength and force ; for Sins, like the Slaves in *Justin*, are often more easily defeated by Whips and Scourges, than by Swords.

The Principles which do the great Work of Religion, are few, clear and irresistible, but a vast Body of Sentences, Notions, Arguments, untried, undigested, are like the Armour of *Saul* upon *David*, unmanagable and cumbersome.

Disputable or intricate Points do yield little or no Nourishment ; Wit and Fancy are also for Ornament, not Food.

Yet weak Stomacks must be fed with easie and digestable Diet ; and this may be made too as pleasant and inviting as it can. God in the Works of Nature has mingled Beauty with Use, Pleasure with Profit, why should we think this unlawful in the Kingdom of Grace ? Variety also may be called in to prevent languor

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and drowfiness ; nay, if the Genius of the Man be such, that his Mind is apt to be exalted, and as it were purified by them, I know not why notional and thin, or mysterious and deep Speculations should be forbidden him ; only in these, and such like Instances, two Errors are to be avoided : *First*, That we do not study more for Delight and Entertainment, than for Edification in Faith and Vertue. *Secondly*, That we do not obtrude our Fancies as Oracles, our Dreams as Articles of Faith upon the World. If I cannot indulge or abound in both, give me the luxury of Love rather than that of Fancy, and let me excel in Humility and Modesty rather than Knowledge and Notion.

St. Peter, in those few words, 1 *Epist.* 2. 2. *As new born Babes, desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby*, seems to have excellently sum'd up the whole Doctrine of Contemplation, comprising at once the Matter, Design, and End of it, together with the Frame and Disposition of Mind, qualifying us for it.

Writing may serve to marshal and preserve our Thoughts, and by this means  
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we may be stocked with Notions which may always be ready Matter and Argument for us to expatiate on; but we ought to take care, that first or last we be moved or affected by what we write, or else this will be rather an Exercise of our Invention than Devotion; and all the Products of it will be rather Essays of Wit and Fancy than of holy Meditation; and we shall be rather apt to be pleased with our Parts, than improved by this Practise.

They who are unable to start proper Matter for Contemplation, or to carry it on regularly and coherently, and by consequence can reap little Fruit by this kind of Exercise, may supply these Defects by Reading, and such Reflections and Applications of it as are most easily and obviously made: For Example, *Matth. 5. And seeing the Multitudes, he went up into a Mountain: And when he was set, his Disciples came unto him. And he opened his Mouth and taught them, saying; O blessed Jesus! Thou, the true Doctor and Teacher, whose Words are Life and Light, Spirit and Truth, I will leave the Multitude, I quit the World, and in the quality of a Disciple I approach near thee,*



O do thou open thy Mouth and speak to me ; I desire not to hear the Voice of the World, or of the Flesh , or of the Devil ; speak *Thou* only to me, speak *Thou* to my Heart and to my Conscience, and let me hear and feel that Voice that spoke Purity to the Leprous, and Life to the Dead, *Blessed is the Poor in Spirit , for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* The Kingdom of Heaven , this is a blessedness indeed ! The Kingdoms of the Earth dazzle and astonish me, my Fancy cannot comprehend, my Ambition cannot aspire after their Grandure and Glory. Ah ! what then must the Kingdom of Heaven be ! But, O my Lord, am I of the number of these Poor ! If I be not, make me so ; let me be never so contemptible to the World , so I be approved and acceptable to thee ; let me have no ambitious Thoughts but for thy Favour, and for the Crown of Righteousness ; let me covet no Riches, no Honour, no Power here, if thy Kingdom be but mine in Reversion, it is abundantly enough ! Thus without straining or pumping, Persons of the lowest Talents, if they have any Tincture of Religion in them, may be easily supplied with variety of Argument , and  
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with most passionate and piercing Thoughts.

O blessed ! O voluptuous Life ! wherein sequestred from the World, I enjoy all that it has in it of pure, of true, or natural. Ah ! that I could once break loose from those Troubles and Obligations that hang upon me, and enter into thy Peace and Tranquility , I would plunge my self into all thy rational Delights ; I would lose my self to this contemptible World , and forgetting those Shadows and Appearances, and at best but faint and weak Reflections of Good, which flutter here about me ; I would abandon my self intirely to the Joys of the Spirit, and the Elevations of Contemplation : Let others enjoy Honour, and Wealth, and Power, let me enjoy my self, Truth, and God ; let others enjoy the Flatteries of Sense , and the Cheats of Fancy ; give me the health of a spritely Mind, the calm and serenity of a silent Retreat, with the pleasure and security which the Divine Presence breeds in it ; let others finally depend on Fortune, me only on my self.

## SECT. III.

*Of the Right Husbanding or Prolonging Life.*

HAVING in the two former Sections, first, proved Life to be in its own Nature a solid Good, a considerable Blessing of Heaven ; and next, endeavoured to prevent the Abuses and Mischiefs to which it is liable , by stating the true Notion of Life ; and by prescribing Rules for the right Conduct of the *Active, Trading, and Contemplative Life* , the next thing that naturally falls under Consideration, is, The shortness and uncertainty of this Blessing ; this is that that puzzles the Wit, and baffles the Courage of Man, the Rock against which all the Attempts of Humane Philosophy have dashed and split themselves ; for, to say truth, whatever Complaints Men make against the Troubles, yet have they ever made more and sharper against the shortness and uncertainty of Life.

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'Tis true, no Cure has ever yet been found of our Mortality, yet as wise Men have ever thought it reasonable to make the most of an Enjoyment, tho' it would not come up to all that they could wish or fancy, so were there no other Life, it would behove us to do with this, to nourish and keep in the flame as long as we can, tho' we know it must go out at last.

Now Life, like Enjoyment, is capable of Accession or Increase two ways, that is, either in its Continuance or Perfection; either by lengthning its Duration, or by raising, improving, or as it were ripening the Joys and Fruits of Life, or Life it self. I will speak first of *prolonging Life*; and here I will, *First*, Demonstrate that *Life* may be prolonged. *Secondly*, I will treat of the ways of prolonging it.

But before I do either, it may be no very wide Digression from my Purpose, to take notice of the little Artifices and Impostures by which many endeavour to evade the strokes of Time, and flatter themselves with a sort of imaginary Immortality.

## C H A P. I.

*The usual Arts of preventing or retarding the Decays of Nature, and lessening the Fears of Death exploded, and better substituted in their room. Physick, instead of which Courage and Contempt of Death. Paint, &c. instead of which the Beauties of the Mind. Children, instead of which Good Works, and so forth. Surviving Honour not wholly rejected, but a true Immortality preferred.*

SOME take Sanctuary in Physick, for which they expect at least the preservation of the health and vigour of Nature, if not the lengthning the Date of Life: I'll not dispute whether this Art has deserved so well of Mankind, as to justify the Gentiles in enrolling the first Authors of it amongst the Gods, or some Christians in attributing its Original to Guardian-Angels: I'll not examine the possibility of that Elixir by which *Artesius* is reported by the *Adepts* to have lived a Thousand years; nor, what is more to the purpose, who have  
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lived longest, whether they who have made most, or they who have made least use of Physick : Or however these Questions be resolved, I am sure our time is better spent in labouring to contemn, than to prevent Death ; and that those excellent Principles which fortifie the Mind , contribute more to the comfort and pleasure of Humane Life, than the most Sovereign Cordials that fortifie the Spirits.

Some being willing to conceal those Decays which they could not prevent , and cannot remedy, have devised many ways to counterfeit and supply that Youth and Beauty which Time and various Accidents have washed and worn away. But alas! to what purpose is it to deck and varnish withered Nature , and paint the Spring upon the Face of Winter? What purpose is it , when the Evil is incurable, to suffer ones self to be flattered and imposed upon, and try in vain to hide a broaken Fortune , not only from the World, but from ones self? Alas! we must feel what we will not see; Nature droops and decays as fast within as it doth without ; and we lose the life and briskness of our Blood, as fast as we  
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do the elegancy of Feature, or the floridness of Complexion. In a word, as to this perishing Body, *Physick*, Washes, and Fucosis are in vain; you but paint and patch a ruinous Fabrick, which can never be made strong and beautiful till Death hath taken it quite down to the Ground, and a Resurrection build it up quite a new. If therefore you would take my Advice, you should lay in a stock of sprightly generous Pleasures, which may be ever ready at hand to entertain you when youth and strength are past; you should take pains to enrich and adorn the Mind, whose Beauties will more than supply the loss of those of the Body; Wisdom, Magnanimity, Bounty, Modesty, Sweetness, Humility, are Charms able to recommend a deformed or a decreped Body, and I am confident may be purchased at a much cheaper rate, than false or counterfeit Beauties are by those who are solicitous about them; let then the Morning and Noon of your Life be spent in acquiring Vertue, Honour, Knowledge, and good Humor, and in your Evening you'll have no reason to complain of the loss of Youth and Beauty; these will be solid Riches, and most  
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amiable Charms, that will provide you both delight and support at home , and command both love and reverence abroad ; and Time will do you no other injury than it does a Tree, when it changes its Blossoms into Fruit; or then it does Statues, Medals and Pictures, whose price and value is enhanced by their Antiquity.

Convinced that the Decays of Nature cannot be long concealed or propt up , some please themselves with an Opinion of Surviving in their Posterity ; as if Man by Generation did but multiply himself, and Life did not, like a flame, end with its fuel , but were conveyed and transmitted from Father to Son, Grandchild, and so on ; like a Stream that's still the same, tho' it passed through numerous Pipes. Well, for my part, I cannot fool my self with a vain gingle of words ; I cannot flatter my self that I shall live in him, who probably will in a little time forget me, however he owe his Being and Fortune to me ; nay, it may be proud and ungrateful, will wish that others did forget me too ; like a Stream running, as soon as it enlarges it self as far as it can from its little Fountain, and labouring as it were by its circlings and wandrings

drings, to conceal the meanness of its rise : I cannot flatter my self, that I can live in them whose Hopes and Fears, Desires and Joys, will differ it may be no less from mine, whatever they now be, than the Dead do from the Living : Fools that we are, to talk so wildly, as if when dead we lived in our Children ; do we when living, share in their distant Joys ? or do our Pulses beat by their Passions ? I would not be mistaken, as if I designed to oppose or extinguish Nature ; I know the great Author of it, for wise and excellent purposes, has implanted in us kind Inclinations towards Posterity, but then these are for the sake of others, not my self, they ripen into Actions that serve the turn of others, not my own ; I only bear the Fruit which others must gather. And whatever pleasure I may now feel in a promising Prospect of the Honour and Vertue of my Posterity, 'tis such a one as that of *Moses* beholding *Canaan* at a distance, but such a distance that he must never enter into it. To conclude, whatever Men promise themselves, I think them tolerably fortunate, if instead of reaping any benefit, when dead, from their Children, their Lives be not stained and disturbed  
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by them ; extremely fortunate if they can make them fit to be their Friends and Favourites, worthy to share their Pleasures, and able to give them some ease in their Troubles ; tho' after all I cannot but think 'tis infinitely more eligible to be the Father of many Good Works , than many Children ; to have a Philosophical Friend or two , than a numerous Offspring ; and to spend my time nobly in cultivating my Mind, than in intangling my Life with Cares for those who often will take none for themselves.

Some have entertained vain Projects of an imaginary Immortality, an Immortality which they must owe neither to God nor Nature, but to Historians and Poets, Painters and Statuaries, and to the dying Eccho's of a surviving Memory ; I mean, that which Men seek in Posthumus Fame, in Pictures, and Statues, and Tombs, and embalming Carkases ; all these seem to carry in them some fading shadows of Being and Existence. But ah ! how imaginary a Life is this ; something that does infinitely less resemble Life and Being, than a Dream does Enjoyment ? Ah vain support of Humane Frailty ! Ah vain relief of Death ! If there be any thing in  
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Honour, if it be Body or Substance enough to be seen, or felt, or tasted; if it be Reality enough to be any way enjoyed, let me possess it while I live; it comes too late, if it serves only to increase the Pumps of my Funeral, or to dress and set off my Sepulchre, or to silence the Groans, or to wipe off the Tears of my Orphans, or my Friends, tho' this be something: I cannot feel any pleasure in the foresight of that Glory, which, while I strain to gaze upon at distance, the Fogs and Mists of Death thicken the Sky; the Voice that will speak me great, will speak me too, Gone and vanished; the Statues and Marbles which adorn my Memory, will adorn my Grave too, and while they express my Image, or my Actions, will proclaim, that all that is now left of me, is Rottenness and Ashes. All this I talk, abstracting from the Considerations of a future Life, for how far the Reputation I leave behind, may concern my Soul in its state of Separation from the Body, whether the Ecchoes of those Praises and Honours bestowed upon my Memory here, will reach and please mine Ears in another World, I know not, nor do I much desire to know;  
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for supposing such a Life, my Soul must needs have nobler Employment, and nobler Pleasure than this can ever give it: I must confess, if the Reflections of my Light, when I am set and gone, would be of any use to direct or inflame Posterity, I should now take some pleasure in that, which 'tis hard to persuade me, I shall take any in hereafter; nor would it be a trifling Satisfaction to me, while I lived, if I could believe that my Relations, or my Friends, could receive any Honour or Patronage from me when dead; and since some sort of Character I must leave behind, since I must in this manner, amongst some at least, and for a little time survive, I had much rather leave behind me perfume than stench; I had rather live in Panegyrick and Commendations, than in Satyrs and Invectives. But after all, how lean and miserable a Comfort is this? that when I am dead, it will be said, I once lived; and a promiscuous Croud will talk of me, and of my Actions, what they please; some things good, some things bad, some things true, some things false; and what is worse yet, I must suffer all the Revolutions of Humors and Parties in following

ing Ages ; these must give my Abilities and Performances their Character , and the prevailing Faction must stamp what Estimate they please upon my Memory.

But by all this, I do not mean utterly to condemn the love of Honour , nay , 'tis really to be cherished when it operates rightly, and spurs Men on to generous and handsom Actions : I love a Charity that is universal and boundless , and extends it self to following Ages ; and certainly there is not a nobler Charity, than to furnish the World with an Example that may adorn its own Times, and enkindle the Emulation of Posterity. Nay further, I am willing to believe, that a gracious God will sum up amongst the Accompts of my Life, the influence it has upon the World when I am dead , and to raise the Estimate of my Vertue, will consider it not simply in it self , but with all the happy Effects which it may any way be the occasion of in successive Ages ; let me then do good , and if I can great Actions, upon any motive, provided it be just and allowable , since this will be the blessed Fruit of it : But yet it shall be my Business to make sure of  
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my own Immortality, if that of my *Name* will follow, let it: It shall be my Business to gain the Approbation of God and Angels, and if the Praises of this lower World joyn their Harmony and Consent with that above, this cannot disoblige me; I will with all my power make sure of my Salvation, and not despise Fame: Great and good men have ever felt some natural Desires of this sort of Immortality: Since then this seems to be an Inclination of God's own planting, 'tis not to be extirpated, but rather carefully cherished and cultivated, and duly pruned and regulated

Having exploded those mistaken Fancies by which Men support themselves against the shortness of Life, I will now proceed to treat of the only two ways by which this Evil may be in some measure remedied, that is, by prolonging the Date, and by improving and perfecting the Nature and Essence of Life, so that a Man may live much in a little time.

## C H A P. II.

## Of Lengthning Life.

**SECT. 1.** *The Fatality of the Period of Life refuted. And Objections from Scripture, from Astrological Predictions, from Divine Prescience, answered. A sort of Fate admitted.* **SECT. 2.** *Of the ways of prolonging Life. First, Cheerfulness of Mind. Secondly, Health of Body. Thirdly, The protection of God and Man.* **SECT. 3.** *Objections against this last Assertion from such Texts as assert the promiscuous Events of Things, and from the early Death sometimes of the Righteous, Answered.*

**U**nder this Article I design to prosecute these three Things:

*First,* To refute the Opinion of a fatal Period of Humane Life. A Fancy which has possessed the Multitude, and with which the Minds, even of such as would seem above it, are not seldom assaulted.

*Secondly,* I will consider what ways the Date of Life may be lengthened.

*Thirdly,*



*Thirdly*, I will remove those Objections with which this Advice is encountered, either from the promiscuous Events hapning alike to Good or Bad, or from the early and immature Death of some righteous Persons. To begin with the first of these :

*First*, It has been too generally taught and believed, That the Date of Humane Life cannot be protracted, that every particular Man has a fixed and immutable Period decreed him, beyond which he cannot go. But this Opinion directly defeats the force of all Motives and Arguments to Vertue, derived from Temporal Considerations, and undermines our dependence upon God, and ridicules our Addresses to him, as far as they concern this Life, and the Things of it : And how plain a step is this to the refutation and overthrow of Judaism, which was built upon Temporal Promises, and consequently to the overthrow of Christianity it self, the Authority of the New Testament depending in so great a measure upon that of the Old, I'll leave every one to guess. And were there no other Reasons to reject this Opinion, besides these alone, these I should think were a-

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boundantly sufficient, since it is impossible that any thing should be consonant to Truth, which is so repugnant to the Interest and Authority of Religion ; but there are so many more , that I must be forced to crowd them together , that I may avoid tediousness and redundancy. This Perswasion then is repugnant to all the Instincts of our Nature ; to what purpose is the Love of Life implanted in us by our great Creator ? why is Self-preservation the first Dictate and Law of Nature, if all our Care and Diligence can contribute nothing towards it ? Vain and impertinent is that Law , whose observation can procure us no Good , nor its Violation any Evil. This is a Perswasion that flatly contradicts the Experience and Observation of Mankind in general ; how can the Period of Life be fixed and unalterable, which we see every day, either lengthened out by Care and Moderation, or shortened by Excess and Negligence, unless we can resolve to the utter overthrow of Religion , not only that Life and Death, but also that Vice and Vertue , Wisdom and Folly , which lead to the one and the other, are alike predetermined necessary and fatal.

tal. Nor is this Opinion less contrary to the Sense and Reason of the Wise and Prudent, than to the Experience of the Multitude ; Self preservation is the first and chief End of Civil Societies and Humane Law ; but how foppish and ridiculous a thing were it for the Grave and Sagacious part of Mankind to enter into deep Consultation, to frame solemn Laws, and devise the strongest Obligations to fence and secure that Life which can neither be invaded one minute before its fatal hour, nor prolonged one minute beyond it ; nor has Man only, but God himself, endeavoured to secure this Temporal Life by the strictest and most solemn Laws, nor this only, but he has made Life and Death the Reward of Obedience, and Punishment of Sin. This Opinion therefore is a manifest Calumny against the Wisdom and Sincerity of God ; against his Wisdom, if he raise up the Pallizado's and Bulwarks of Laws to guard and defend that Life, which can neither be violated before, nor extended beyond its minute : His *Sincerity*, for his Promises would be ludicrous and insignificant, and so would his Threats too ; if neither the Obedience of the Vertuous

could lengthen, nor the disobedience of the Sinner could shorten Life ; and in a word, to what purpose does the Spirit in *1 Pet. 3. 10, 11.* invite and encourage Men to Religion by the Proposal of Life and Prosperity, if in the bottom and truth Life and Prosperity depend, not on our Behaviour, but our Fate, and be not dispensed according to the open Proposals, but the secret and unconditional, the rigid and inflexible Decrees of the Almighty. I would not stop here, but heap together a multitude of other Arguments against this Error, did I not remark, that as it has prevailed too much to be despised, so has it too little to be laboriously refuted, and that it has so weak a Foundation, that few of those that defend it do believe it, or at leastwise so heartily, as to suffer it to have any Influence upon their Counsels or Actions ; Turks, Astrologers, and the most superstitious Assertors of Fate, being no more free from the Fears of Death, or a Concern for Life, than the rest of Mortals.

The truth of this Proposition being thus made out by unanswerable Reasons, we are not to suffer our selves to be moved

ved by any superstitious Imaginations , by any obscure or subtle Objections, or by any meer Colours or Appearances of Reason , for what is once clear and evident, ought to remain firm and unshaken, thô we cannot unravel every Objection against it, therefore thô I should not be able to reconcile this Doctrine with some obscure Texts of Scripture, with a certainty of God's Prescience, and with some particular Predictions of Men, who have pretended to read the fatal Periods of Humane Life in the Schemes of Heaven ; yet ought its Authority to be preserved, as built upon plain Texts and solid Reasons, and attested by the Suffrages of the Prudent and Wise, and by the daily Observation of the Multitude. But the truth is, there is nothing objected here, but what is capable of a very easie answer ; the Scriptures, which speak an appointed time for Man upon Earth , are not to be understood of any particular personal Fate, but of a general Law or Rule of Nature , not of the extent of every particular persons Life , but of the duration of Man in general , or of the Mortality of our Frame and Constitution, and the shortness of Man's residence



here upon Earth ; and imply no more than that Man, as well as all other Species of Animals, and indeed of Vegetables , for so far *Job* extends the Comparison , hath his time appointed the Bounds of his Life or Abode here set him, beyond which he cannot pass. *Psalms 90. 10. The days of our Age are threescore years and ten , and thô Men be so strong that they come to fourscore years , yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow, so soon passeth it away, and we are gone.* As to Astrological Predictions, if the Accomplishment of any of them be attested by unquestionable Authority , and they be not like the Prophecies of Poets , made or mended after the Event , yet methinks, were not the Minds of Men very prone to Superstition, a thousand Errors should be sufficient to discredit and disparage one good Guess, and no Man of Sense should have a value for a pretended Science, whose Grounds and Principles are evidently uncertain and precarious ; no Man of any Religion should be fond of that, which to say no worse of it, seems to stand condemned by God in Scripture ; for thô I must not dissemble this Truth, that the Idolatry which was ever blend-  
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ed with it, seems especially to have drawn down a severe Sentence upon it, yet can it not be denied, but that *Isaiab* 47. *Jeremiah* 10. and other places of holy Writ seem to look upon it with no very favourable or benign Aspect. As to the Prescience of God, I see not how the denial of a fatal Period of Humane Life clashes with this; on the quite contrary, he seems to me injuriously to limit and restrain the Knowledge of God, who thinks he foreknows nothing, but because he peremptorily predetermined it; this, if we will speak sense, is to magnifie his Power, but to reduce and confine his Knowledge, or at leastwise to depress and debase it, for thus it would not be a primary and essential Perfection, but would result from, or depend upon an Arbitrary Will, an unguided Power; for my part, I cannot think it necessary, if I could not reconcile God's fore-knowledge with contingency in Events, therefore with the *Socinian* to deny the one, or with the *Fatalist* the other; 'tis enough to me that I learn from Scripture, that is, from God who cannot err, that Prescience belongs to the Creator, and Contingency to the Creature; the measures and bounds of

of these, if there be any, let who will seek, 'tis not my Business now.

But yet, after all this, if any Man will contend for such a kind of Fate as is not rigid and inflexible, but submits to the interposal of the Divine Prerogative, and leave sufficient Encouragement for the Labour, Vertue, and Prayers of Man, I oppose it not, Nature has its Laws, but such as God, whenever he pleases, overrules; the Government of Man is not without order and method, much less the Government of God; we are born into the World with different Constitutions; but yet the unhealthy one may be rectified and mended by Vertue, the healthy corrupted by Vice and Irreligion; such a sort of Fate or Destiny as this that is flexible, and accommodated to the Interest of Religion, in which the Evil may be corrected, or the good perverted; such a Fate as this, tho' the Word be improper, I readily admit, but no other: No other, I say, in the general; for as to those particular Exceptions and Reservations, which at any time God may, and often does make, from any general Rule or Law, for causes always weighty and important, and generally hidden

hidden and inscrutable, these I meddle not with.

Having thus evinced that the Period of Humane Life is not fatally fixed, that no peremptory and unconditional Decree, no insuperable Connection or Concatination of Causes does supersede our Vigilance and Industry for the preservation of this Blessing: I will now proceed to the second thing proposed, and consider which way the Date of Life may be lengthened.

*Sect.2. Of the ways of prolonging Life.*

'Tis obvious and manifest to every one, that Life depends upon these three Things: The cheerfulness of the Mind: The health of the Body; And a favourable Providence of God, by which, as none will deny who admit of Providence, we may at least be protected from violence and unlucky Accidents, such as Humane Prudence cannot foresee. And to these three, may, for ought I know, be added, the good will of Man, whose Ministry and Service is very often of excellent use to us in this Point.

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*First*, The first thing then I am now to enquire into, is briefly what Cheerfulness of Mind does contribute to the preservation of Life, and then more fully, how we may possess our selves of it. 'Tis true, the morose and sour, the froward, the passionate, and the sullen, those stains and Blots of Humane Nature do often prolong their Lives to a great Age, as if Nature were renewed and repaired by this kind of Fermentation, or the Blood and Spirits kept sweet like Water by a perpetual Agitation; but 'tis as true that the loose and debauched, the intemperate and incontinent do sometimes, tho' rarely live long, and descend into the Grave, rather oppressed by their years than their Excesses, and if from such extraordinary Instances as these, we shall take the Liberty to form Rules of Life, and to contradict known and received Truths, we shall ever live at the mercy of Fancy, and never find any sure and firm footing to rest upon; I will not therefore doubt, notwithstanding these rare Instances, but that the cheerfulness of the Mind has a very propitious, its discontent a very malign influence, upon the Life of Man; the  
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contentment of the Mind preserves the Balfom of the Blood, and the Pleasure of it enlarges the Heart, raises the Spirits, actuates and invigorates all our Powers; so that when the Mind shines serene and bright, it seems to impart a new warmth, and new life to the Body, a new Spring, and new Verdure to this Earth : On the contrary, a diseased Mind does, as it were, scatter its Contagion through the Body; Discontent and Melancholy sours the Blood, and clogs the Spirits, Envy pines away, and Passion frets and wears out our strength and life. In few words, there is an intimate conjunction between the Mind and Body ; and so close is the dependance of the latter upon the former, that the face of inferiour Nature does evidently vary, wither or flourish, according to that variety of Weather it makes in the Sky about it, as the Mind smiles or lowrs upon it ; and accordingly, if we appeal to Experience and Observation, I believe we may safely pronounce, that generally such live longest, who either think very little , or whose thoughts are always calm and cheerful ; such who are stupid, and have no Passions, or are wise and good, and have none but

but such as are regular and delightful; to this purpose, in part, is that of *Solomon*, *The Spirit of Man will sustain his Infirmitie, but a wounded Spirit who can bear?* All this, I think, is not contested; and all the difficulty lies in possessing our selves of this satisfaction and contentment of Mind; Men seek it in every thing, and even those things which are Diometrically opposite to one another, do each pretend to be infallible Guides to it: Atheism and Religion, Philosophy and Ignorance, Worldly Prudence or Policy, and an affected contempt of it, which I know no name for, do all promise to teach us the Art of Satisfaction; but it will not be a very difficult task, when we have examined the pretences of each, to resolve which we are to follow.

Ignorance, Lust, and Fancy are too blind, rash, and violent for us to abandon our selves to their Conduct; nor are they more giddy and inconstant in themselves, than weak and subject to all the Changes and odd Accidents of the World; so that should they lead us on to Pleasure, we have reason to apprehend Pain the next moment, and at best, they leave us not in a Condition, either rationally  
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to approve our Enjoyments, or to fortify our selves against the loss of them.

Worldly Policy is built wholly upon Mistakes, it proposes to us things under the notion of great and good, which when we have examined, we find not worth our seeking, and of these it can give us no assurance, whether we respect their Acquisition or Possession; and the ways it prescribes to put us in possession of all that satisfaction which results from these things, have something in them so mean, so laborious, so uncertain, so vexatious, that no Success can compensate that trouble and shame which the canvassing for them puts us to.

Atheism pretends indeed to extinguish our Guilt and Fears, but it does also deface all the beauty and loveliness of Humane Actions; it pretends indeed to let loose the Reins to Pleasure, but withal, it leaves us no support under Evil; it takes off indeed many Restraints, but withal, it unchains and lets loose our Passions: In a word, it leaves us nothing truly great or lovely to enjoy in this World, or hope for in another; and if its Tenets were useful to us, yet have they no certainty, no foundation; it derives all  
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its credit from the Confidence, not Reason of Men, who under colour of a free and impartial Philosophy, advance the Interest of those Lusts to which they are intirely enslaved.

Religion then only remains to be followed ; this rectifies our Opinions , and dispels our Errors, and routs those Armies of imaginary Evils which terrifie and torment the World, much more than Spirits and Ghosts do ; this discovers to us Objects worthy of all the love and admiration of our Souls ; this expiates our Guilt , and extinguishes our Fear ; this shews us the happiness of our present Condition, and opens us a glorious prospect of our future one ; this discovers to us the happy tendancy of Temporal Evils, and the glorious reward of them ; and in one word, teaches us both to enjoy and suffer ; it moderates our desires of things uncertain , and out of our power, and fixes them upon those things for which we can be responsible ; it raises the Mind, clears the Reason, and finally forms us into such an united settled and compacted state of strength , that neither the Judgment is easily shaken, nor the Affections hurried by any violent

violent transport or emotion. But do I not here immitate Physicians, who attend only to the most dangerous Symptoms, and neglect others? Whether I do or no, they who read such general Directions, are wont to do so in their Application of them; and most are apt to look upon Religion as designed only to redress substantial and formidable Evils. And yet 'tis with the Mind as with the Body, thô Fevers, Imposthumes, Defluxions, &c. kill, the anger of a puffle, the pain of a Tooth, do strangely disorder and disturb; and thus thô Pain, and Death, and such like Evils, overthrow and overwhelm the Mind, yet are there a croud of slight and trifling Evils which disquiet and discompose it; and this is a Matter not to be contemn'd, especially by me, in the prosecution of the Design I am here upon, since I perswade my self that the great and formidable Evils, Guilt, Pain, Poverty, Sickneß, Death, or the Thoughts and Apprehensions of them, do but very rarely afflict the Life of Man; but there are other Evils of a slighter Nature, which like Pirates, are perpetually cruising on our Coasts, and thô they cannot invade and destroy, do  
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much disturb and annoy us. Nay, what is yet more, 'tis very usual to see Men acquit themselves very honourably under true and substantial Evils, who come off very poorly from the Encounter of slight and despicable ones; how common is it, for one who maintains bravely his Courage and Judgment amidst Swords and Bullets, to lose all Patience, Prudence and Government, when attacked by a rude Jest, a brisk, or it may be a bold and senseless Reflection; to see a Man that hears very calmly the loss of a Ship, or a considerable Sum of Money, transported into strange indecency upon the breaking of a Glass, or the spoiling of a Dish of Meat; and he who sits very tamely and unconcernedly down under a disgraceful Character, sweats and raves if robbed but of a Cabbage or an Apricock: These, and such like Remarks, one may make every day, and almost in every Company; and what is the worst of all, our Fears and Sorrows, our Hate and Anger, are as violent and uneasie, when they spring from Causes of the least, as of the highest moment. We bewail fantastick and true Misfortunes with the same sighs and tears, and resent

resent imaginary and substantial Injuries with the same disordered Pulse and deformed Looks. When I have reflected on all this, I have often thought that it was as necessary to the tranquility of Humane Life, to guard my self against Dust and Flies, as against Storms and Tempests, to arm my self against the stings of a swarm of vexatious Accidents, as against Pestilence, and War, and Poverty, and Blindness, or Deafness. And to this end these three or four following Rules have often been of great use to me.

*First*, Of the Evils of Life I never take more to my share than are really my own, I never travel abroad to find out foreign Mischiefs to torment my self, as if there were not enough of the Native growth of my Country; my own Mind, my own Body, my own House are Provinces wide enough for me, and a little too fruitful too, nay, I am not ashamed to confess, I decline, if I can, an Evil even lying in my way, as I do a bustle or a fray, by passing on the other side of the Street. I'll never split upon a Shelf or Rock, if I have Sea-room enough. And as a little distance of Place, so a little distance of Time, serves my turn to make me

reckon such Evils as none of mine : I le no more distract or disturb my self with the Evils that are fancied teeming in the Womb of Time, than with those that are now in being in *Peru* or *Mexico*; this is the very Lecture Religion reads me, for sure to incorporate distant Evils, or to anticipate future ones, were far from *Studying to be quiet, and doing ones own business*; or from thinking with our Saviour, *Sufficient for the day is the Evil thereof*, and were indeed to suffer as *busie bodies, fearful, and unbelievers* ; If any man will impute this to me as brutality and uncharitableness, I cannot help it ; I thank God that I have sense enough to Practise Caution without fear, Care without Anxiety, and Charity without Distress or Agony of Mind. *Secondly*, As to those Evils (I speak still of slight and daily ones) which do really fall to my share, and I cannot avoid ; my next care is to weaken their Force, to disarm them of their Sting, their Teeth and Venom, if they have any ; I take from them all the terror that Fancy and Opinion have given them, and will no more, if I can help it, suffer my Imagination, than my Taste or Feeling, to be abused or imposed

posed upon. In the next place, I carefully fortifie and strengthen my self, see that my state be healthy, and my Nature firm, lest I should complain of the Meat, when the fault is in my Stomach; or think the Bed ill made, when the cause of my uneasiness is in the Body. And lastly, when I have reduced the Evil to its own natural size, generally 'tis of such a Pigmy, Dwarfish growth, that I can securely slight it, I can master it with very little trouble and industry, or at worst with a very little patience; and that I may not be wanting here, I look upon it as a Task I am born to, as an Inconvenience that I can no more shun, than any natural Defects in my Body, or my Mind, or than I can the Cares and Fatigues of my Calling. *Thirdly*, I labour above all things to fill my Soul with great and ravishing Pleasures, to inflame it with a generous Ambition, and, in one word, to possess it with that habitual Poverty of Spirit, Meekness, Purity, Charity, commended to his Disciples by our Lord and Master, that I am generally above the buz and fluttering of these, rather Impertinences, than Evils of Humane Life, and do often suffer them with-

out being sensible of them ; but I can never often enough put the World in mind of the vast difference there is between the fits and habits of these Vertues. What we could do in a pious humour, that we should always do , were but the weak Impression once converted into Nature, the short-liv'd Passion changed into steady habit ; but 'tis high time to pursue my Design , I am almost afraid, I dwell so long upon a Head, that the most pertinent Parts of my Discourse may now and then look like Digression. The next thing to be considered, after the *Cheerfulness of the Mind*, is

*Secondly*, The Health of the Body. Life does so apparently depend on this, that in the vulgar Notion it signifies much the same thing. 'Tis notorious, Life decays and expires with the health and strength of the Body, and when it is protracted after these are gone, it scarce deserves the Name of Life, any more than the Noise of an ill-strung and ill-tuned Instrument does that of Musick. But I need not teach any Body the value of Health, or press them to the preservation of the Body, I should be sufficiently obliging to the World, if I could teach it  
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any Art by which they might be restored to that Blessing which it enjoyed before the Flood, a long Life of many hundreds of years. But I know no Art that can raise Nature above its own Laws, or retrieve its Youth, if it be now in its Decrepitude : One thing I know , that we too commonly debauch and corrupt Nature first, and then load her with our Reproaches and Accusations ; we should undoubtedly live much longer, and this Life would be more healthy and verdant, that is, more vital than it is, did we but observe the dictates of Religion, the Laws of Vertue , and not prefer before them those of Lust and Fancy. How much soever Men complain of the shortness of Life, 'tis little to be doubted, but that most Men do notwithstanding, shorten it themselves by some Crime, or Error or other. If we could consult the sickly crasie part of Mankind , I mean such as are so in the middle , or almost beginning of their years, and demand of them what blasted their Beauty, and impaired their Strength ? what thus violated and contaminated their Nature ? we should soon be resolved to what Original their Diseases were owing, if at least

their shame and blushes would give them leave to inform us : And if we should endeavour to trace the Deaths of most of those who are gone hence before their time, back to their first Cause, I do not think but that our search would soon end in some Vice or Folly or other; this Man drank too much, the other too much indulged his Appetite; one was devoted to his Lust, and another putrified in his Sloth, all of them, in our common phrase, *did live too fast*; but in truth and propriety of Speech, *died too fast*; for since Life is nothing else but acting by Reason, every Deviation from it is an Approach towards Death. But to proceed; 'Tis not unusual to see Pride kill one, Passion another, Avarice and Ambition a third, while to gratifie these Affections, the Body is either exposed to dangers, or worn out by labour. Now, if we can generally find the Causes of most early Deaths in Mens Vices, when so little of other Mens Lives comes to our knowledge, what think you, should we not be able to discover, if we could enter into the Retirements, and penetrate all the Secrets of Mankind, how many hidden Passions do gnaw the Heart? how many

many secret Sins do waste and consume the Strength ? where, not only Concealment excludes the Eye, but a show of probity, nay, a real and eminent practice of some particular Vertue excludes even Suspition and Jealousie. If then Immorality do often contract the term of Life, 'tis evident what is to be prescribed for the prolonging it, Religion or Vertue is the best Physick : It has often mended an ill Constitution, but never spoiled a good one. When did ever Chastity impoverish the Body, or deflower the Face ? when did ever Temperance inflame the Blood, or oppress the Spirits ? when did ever Industry or Vigilance sour the Humours, and enfeeble the Nerves ? No Cruities, no Plethories, no Obstructions, no Affidities, no Stagnations, Extravasations, and I know not what hard Names, and harder Things, derive themselves from Vertue or Religion. 'Tis true, a Man may be Righteous over-much, he may entitle his Folly, his Melancholy, his particular Fancy, or his particular Complexion or Constitution, Religion, and this may prove mischievous to him, to his health, to his strength, but then this is not the fault of Religion, but the Man;

Man; and to speak properly, this is not Righteousness nor Religion, tho' it be called so, but it is Fancy and Folly, or an ill Constitution disguised under the garb and the meen of Religion. Vertue then is the most probable way to a long Life, or if not so, at least to a more comfortable and honourable Death; for where an early Death is the Result of a Providence, not a Crime, we must needs meet it with less Amazement our selves, and our Friends behold it with less Regret and Affliction.

*Thirdly*, The third way of prolonging Life, is to engage the Providence of God in its Preservation. If all the Promises God has made the Vertues of a long Life, did really signifie nothing, I cannot see how we could put up any Request to God, relating to Temporal Protection, with Faith or Fervor, or as much as Sincerity; but if they signifie any thing, then surely they must signifie that his Providence is actively imployed for the preservation of vertuous Men? And how great a Security is this? What can be impossible to him who is the Governour and Creator of the World, in whose disposal all created *Means* are, and in whose  
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Power it is, if these be insufficient to create new ones? To him whose unerring Laws can never miss of those ends he aims at, or if they could, his Power is ever at hand to supply their Defects, and accommodate and attemper them to particular Emergencies; and his Prerogative is under no ties, no limitations but those of his Divine Wisdom; well might the *Psalmist* say, *I laid me down and slept, for 'tis thou Lord makest me dwell in safety.* Every good Man might say the same, as far as he has a Divine Warrant, not in Peace and Health only, but in Sicknes, in a Tempest, whether by Sea or Land, in a Plague, in a Battle, in a Siege, in a Storm; to believe ourselves under the Patronage and Protection of God, seems to me nothing less than to believe that he will make those things we are concerned in, flow with a smooth and gentle Stream, that he will place us in a state or condition of Life, safe and agreeable; or if not, that in distresses and dangers he will contrive the methods of our Rescue, and where the ordinary are insufficient, find out extraordinary; that he will concur and co-operate with the natural course of things, or  
if



if he see it fit, that he will exert a supernatural Force, and vouchsafe an extraordinary Succour. Plainly thus, tho I know not the unsearchable Methods of Divine Providence, yet from God's concerning himself for my good, I may boldly infer, that in my sickness, I may hope for that from God, which I cannot from the skill of my Physician; that in troublesome Times I may expect that from Providence which I cannot from the Wisdom, Justice, or Power of the Magistrate; that in necessitous, involved, and intricate Circumstances, I may promise myself that Issue from his Favour, which I cannot from the Prudence, Integrity, or Bounty of my Friends: And in a word, that in all Cases I can hope for that from my Prayers, which I otherwise could not from Humane Power or Policy. The sum of all is, all the natural means of our Security and Life are in the hands of God, and if these should be deficient, nothing can restrain him from exerting a Supernatural Force and Vertue for our Preservation; his fixed and universal Laws are infinitely wise; but if at any time our Affairs should require his immediate interposal, I know not why I should fancy  
his

his Prerogative so bounded, that he cannot, or will not interpose; and tho' his Pavilion be thick Clouds, and he walk upon the Wings of the Wind; tho' his Providence be a great Abyſs, and the swiftness and secreſie of his actings elude our Search, and baffle our Inquiries, so that we cannot discern when he Acts by Prerogative, when by Law, yet I doubt not but that he does frequently exert a miraculous and extraordinary Power.

This being so, 'tis plain that our great Business is to engage the Providence of God on our Behalf, that we may have an unerring Guide of this dubious and floating Life, a firm support of this mortal corruptible Nature; and I think I need not prove that Religion is the effectual way to oblige God, if this be the great Message that we have received of the Son of God, *that God is Light*, then St. John's Inference must needs be good, that he only who walks in the Light, can maintain a Communion with him, that is, be dear and acceptable to him; a Spiritual and rational Worship must be the only Method to endear our selves to a God, who is a wise Spirit. Nay, tho' all the Precepts of Religion should not be necessarily founded

founded in their consonancy and agreeableness to the Divine Nature, yet still since they are the Precepts of God, we need search for no other Reason for the acceptableness of our Obedience: 'Tis true, all the heights of Purity, to which the Gospel invites us, are not necessary to the health and strength of the Body, yet are they serviceable to the perfection and improvement of our Nature; they are not all indispensable to the happy conduct of our Temporal Affairs, but they are useful to the Felicity and Glory of our Eternal; and therefore the more Religious we are, the more we shall please God: But I will insist no longer on so uncontested a Point, Nature it self dictates, that an imitation of their Vertues is the strongest Obligation we can lay upon the Wise or Good; and Obedience the most effectual Recommendation of us to the Sovereign Powers; whether therefore we consider God as the *Best*, or the *Greatest*, the Characters under which the very Light of Nature did ever represent him, Religion, that is, Imitation and Obedience, are the only ways by which we may ever come to pretend to his Favour.

Nor

Nor is Vertue less apt to procure the Favour and Amity of Man than that of God ; it fences us about with the Arms and Succours of Mankind, it guards us with all their Eyes, and with all their Prayers ; for their Love and Reverence make them both active and wakeful in our Service.

How directly repugnant to all this are the Effects of Irreligion ; it leaves us no other Safeguard than that of our own Strength and Vigilance ; which, to speak properly, is to deliver us up into the hands of our Folly and Fear, our Weakness and Cowardise : For alas, what were my single Reason or Force, when I have neither God nor Man to second me ! how much less when the Indignation of the one, and the secret Aversion or open Enmity of the other, scare and intimidate me ! how can a Man hold out against Dangers, if he be betrayed by his own Guilt within, and his Reason over-thrown by ominous Fears, do not lessen, but multiply his Terrors : Hence is that of *Solomon*, *The wicked flee when no Man pursueth, but the Righteous are as bold as a Lion* : Abandoned by God and Man, he seems at last abandoned by himself too.

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The sum of what I have said under this Article amounts to this, First, I have proved that the Date of Humane Life is not fatal and unalterable, from whence I thought it necessarily followed, that it was capable of being prolonged or protracted; therefore I proceeded, Secondly, to consider by what means it might be prolonged: And here, supposing that nothing could be more conducive to this than *a cheerful Mind, a healthful Body, and a propitious Providence*, I have made it evident, that these are to be sought in the practice of Religion and Vertue, which is nothing else than what inspired Authors have frequently taught; *Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Thou shalt come to thy Grave in a full Age, like as a shock of Corn cometh in its Season.* A blessed and perfect Religion! at once the Guard and Joy of Life! at once the Support and Delight of Humane Nature!

Sect. 3. Two Objections against the Design of the former Paragraphs, Answered.

But against this whole Discourse it will be objected, *First*, How is this that  
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you contend for ? how are those Texts which make length of days the Reward of Obedience to the Divine Laws, reconcilable with those other, which, as far as concerns their Temporal Effects, seem to equal Wisdom and Folly, and level Righteousness with Wickedness, asserting the promiscuousness of all Events to the Vertuous and Vitious ? *All things come alike to all : there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked, to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean ; to him that sacrificeth , and to him that sacrificeth not : As is the good, so is the sinner, and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an Oath, Eccles. 9. 2.* And this is extended as far as Death it self ; *How dieth the wise man ? as the fool, Eccles. 2. 16.* Innumerable are the Answers to this Objection , but one only fits my purpose, which is plainly this, That these are Rhetorical Exaggerations of Humane Vanity ; Wise and Good Men, as well as others, have their Natural Passions ; and therefore Divine Writings have their Figures, as well as those that are purely Humane : These therefore, and the like Speeches, design not to derogate from the Efficacy of Vertue, or weaken the force of the

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Divine

Divine Promises, but to humble the Vanity of Man, and convert his fondness for this World into a greater for a better ; and are not therefore to be understood in such a general and unlimited sense, as if there were no difference between the Righteous and the Wicked , with respect to Temporal Good and Evil, Life and Death ; but only thus, that the Righteous are not so universally exempt from Temporal Evils , but that some or other of them, in all Ages , are liable to them , even to an untimely Death it self : But what then, such extraordinary Instances of an inscrutable Providence, ought no more to derogate from the Excellence of Wisdom and Virtue, or the Veracity of God, than some few Shipwracks ought to discredit Navigation, or the failing of some few Traders disparage Art and Industry ; 'tis enough that the experienced and skilful, the careful and diligent, do generally Sail and Trade successfully. And this may in part suffice for an Answer to another Objection of the same Nature with this, only that this relates to all Events in general, but the Objection following to a particular one.

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If long Life be a great Blessing at present, and recommends Men to greater afterwards, and if Religion and Vertue be on both these Accounts entitled to it, whence is it that an immature Death snatches away sometimes the best of Men, that it stops them in the very progress of their Vertue, and in a full career towards Perfection and Glory? I answer,

1. The Providence of God is a great Deep, *His Judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out.*

2. I cannot believe that this early Death, which intercepts the Fruits of a growing Vertue, shall bereave the Vertues of any degree of that future Glory, to which such Fruits would have entitled them, I should rather think, with the Author of the Book of *Wisdom*, that having compleated their Perfection in a little time, they had in a little time finished their Course, and by what they did do, gave such plain Proofs of what they would do, that God rewards their Purposes as he does the Actions of others, and therefore hasteneth to take them to himself. But however this matter be, I am content to believe,

3. That as God orders all the particular Events of Life to the Good of those that love him, so much more must he dispose this biggest Event that befalls a mortal Man, that is, Death, to their Interest and Benefit; and therefore this immature Death is doubtless, to the Righteous, better than Life, tho' we should not be able to discern why. They dye in their Perfection, their Glory yet unfulfilled, their Felicity unstained, no vile Temptation, no Misfortune having yet triumphed over them, an Advantage which we much admire when we see great and good Men surprized, or overpowered by Weaknesses and Calamities, for then we cannot but acknowledge, that if Death had come sooner it had been much kinder, for they had been gathered into the Store-house of the Dead, like Corn into the Granary before unseasonable or immoderate Rain had corrupted it, or any malignant Vapors blasted it.

Lastly, I know not how Heaven has dealt with these its Favourites, peradventure 'tis in the Moral as in the Political World, some are born to that Greatness which others acquire with labour; he

he never dyes to soon who dyes ripe and perfect ; and if these Divine Souls came into the World enrich'd with more Light and Beauty, with more impetuous Inclinations to Vertue than those of others, of other Men; if their short Life were so innocent, so bright, that out of a particular Grace God thought fit to exempt them from the Miseries of this Life ; or that upon the Account of a particular Pre-eminence, they needed not pass through the Trial, the Discipline and Purgations of it, on either of these Supposals we ought not to commiserate, but revere their Fate.



## C H A P. III.

*Of improving Life, or living  
much in a little time.*

*What is to be understood by improving or exalting Life, and the Advantages of this Notion. Three ways of improving Life. Sect. 1. By perfecting Nature. Man and Life, mean things till Wisdom and Vertue stamp a value on them. This particularly exemplified, with respect to Knowledge, and the due regulation of the Affections. Sect. 2. By beginning to Live betimes, or at least immediately. No Objection against becoming presently wise and happy, but the difficulty of becoming so. An Exhortation, Addressed, 1. To the Young. 2. To those advanced in Years. Closed with a Reflection on the Day of Judgment. Sect. 3. By avoiding all those things that are injurious to Life; as Sloth, Impertinence, Remissness or Coldness in Religion; Levity and Inconstancy.*

cy. *Some other Directions deferred to the following Treatises.*

**T**O understand aright what it is I here aim at, what I mean by the *Improvement or Exaltation of Life*, 'tis necessary to call to mind the true Notion of Life laid down in the beginning, That it is the right use of all our Powers and Faculties, the rational Exercise, the wise Imployment of our whole Nature. Now if this be so, 'tis plain that we live just as much as we act and enjoy, I mean always rationally; that as we advance and grow up towards a Perfection of Nature, the more is Life also raised and refined: Thus if the Life of the Understanding be to think, to discover and contemplate Truth and Goodness, then surely its Life is enlarged with Knowledge; if the Life of the Soul of Man, I mean his Will and Affections, be to choose and pursue, admire and love true Good, then certainly our Life is perfected with our Vertue, and augmented with our Religion. In a word, if the Life of Man do not consist in the Motion of Animal Spirits, but the Exercise of his Rational Powers and Faculties; if the true Health

of Man be not to be judged by the regularity of his Pulse, but the harmony of his Affections ; if finally, the thing called Life be not to be measured by Hours, and Days, and Months, and Years, but by Activity and Enjoyment, by the Rational Acts of a Rational Nature ; then sure I may boldly conclude, That the more regularly and constantly we pursue the proper Business of our Nature, the more actively and vigorously we are carried on towards that which is our proper Good, so much the more we *live*, so much the more rich and racie, the more true, natural, and pure is Life ; and all this is no other Philosophy than what the Wise-man has long ago advanced ; *For honourable Age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years But Wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age*, Wisdom 4. 8, 9. This indeed is a Truth of too vast an Importance to be a new one ; for were it but once throughly imbibed, it would relieve all the Pressures, and redress all the Grievances of Humane Life. We complain of Life, that it is dull and nautious, we impeach it a vanity and vexation of short-

shortness and uncertainty, how would this one Notion, well pursued, soon silence all these Complaints ; he would never think Life too short, who were ripe for Death ; he would never complain that Life were uncertain, who were always ready to die ; he would not accuse Life of dulness and nauseousness, who were daily advancing his Discovery of Truth, and enlarging his Possession of Good ; nor would he ever charge it with Vanity and Vexation, were his Actions still wise and rational ; for thus every act of Life would be an act of Fruition too, being both agreeable to Nature, and attended by a delightful Approbation and Complacency of Conscience. By this time 'tis plain what the Design of this Chapter is, namely, to compensate the shortness by the excellence of Life, and redress the vanity and vexation of it by its Perfection ; a Design, I confess, worthy of a more comprehensive Mind, and a more elevated Fancy than mine ; a Design, demanding all the Wisdom and Experience of an Active, and all the Thought and Learning of a Contemplative Life ; a Design, in a word, that requires at once the Prudence of old Age,  
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and the Vigour of blooming Years ; that I am willing to contribute the little I can towards it, proceeds from a sense of its being a Duty I owe my self and Mankind ; let me not therefore be oppressed by the grandeur of my Subject, and the expectation of my Reader , I promote the good of Mankind in my way, and as I am able, it were a Crime if I did not, and it will be Injustice to expect more from me : Besides, I purpose not here to lay out my whole strength, tho' this be little, having destined an entire Volume to *Humane Perfection* ; and therefore shall here Discourse but very briefly, and in very general terms, of the Improvement of Life.

All the Advice I shall offer here, may be reduced to these Three Heads.

*First*, That we endeavour to perfect and exalt our Nature.

*Secondly*, That we begin to live betimes ; or if we cannot now do that, our Years being far spent, that we begin to live immediately.

*Thirdly*, That we avoid all those things that are Enemies to our true Life.

Sect. I. We must endeavour to perfect and exalt our Nature. The Necessity of  
this



this will be very conspicuous to any one, who shall consider that the Perfection of our Acts depends upon the Perfection of our Faculties and Powers, just as the pleasure of Seeing does on the goodness of the Eye, or that of Hearing on the Perfection of the Ear, so much, and much more, does the Beauty of Humane Action, and the Gust of all our Enjoyments depend upon the clearness of the Judgment, the rectitude of the Will, and the vigour of our Passions. To render this Argument yet more visible and palpable, let us consider how mean a thing Man were, and how contemptible Life, without Cultivation or Improvement: The Body is but a heap of Dust, something there needs to stamp a value upon it; something there must be to give Sweetness to the Eye, Charm to the Tongue, and Grace to Motion: 'Tis a meer Machine alike capable of being made the Instrument of Cruelty or Mercy, of Lust or Chastity, of Avarice or Charity; 'tis Religion must purge and sanctifie it; 'tis Wisdom must conduct and guide it, and make it the happy Instrument of great and glorious Actions. The Spirit within us is a volatile, mutable,

ble, unsteady thing, capable of all sorts of Impressions, suspended as it were between Heaven and Earth, floating between the different Shores of Good and Evil: Knowledge and Vertue forms it into Angel, stamps a sort of Divinity upon it, for we art not born, but made great; 'tis Wisdom that imprints it with bright Idea's, that impregnates it with noble Passions, and determines its tendency towards its true Good and supreme Felicity: Our Conversation with the World is naturally nothing else but a dull intercourse of Forms, and Ceremonies, and Civilities, a nauseous Circulation of the same tasteless and superficial Entertainments, a tedious and repeated pursuit of vain mistaken ends, and often baffled Designs; 'tis Vertue and Knowledge that gives gust and relish to our Enjoyments, and Life and Spirit to all our Actions; that leads us on towards excellent Ends, and inspires us with immortal Hopes; our Fortune and Condition in the World is naturally a fluctuating unstable Agitation, made up of a confused and motly variety of Events; Knowledge and Vertue fix the floating Island, and give Light and Beauty to the Chaos.

I can never carry this Argument too far, and therefore I will yet a little more particularly consider what Accession or Increase of *Life* we derive from *perfecting* our Natures. Does Life consist in the Exercise of our Faculties? True Life then is the Portion of the Active and Industrious; the dull and heavy Motion of the Sluggard is but a faint Imitation or Resemblance of it; 'tis a diseased languishing thing, a compound or mixture wherein there seems to be more of Death than Life. Does Life consist in Fruition? how dark and dismal are those of the Wicked, compared to the calm and bright days of the Good! for what can there be like Enjoyment to that Man, who dares make no Reflections on the past, nor can entertain any just Hopes of the future, and whose Mind concurs not with his present Passions, and refuses to joyn in the senseless Designs he is upon. Does Life lastly consist, as I have proved it does, in the Knowledge of Truth and Love of Goodness? how scanty, narrow, and beggarly is the Life of the Fool and Sinner, compared to that of the Wise and Vertuous! *Tully said, One vertuous day was to be preferred before a sinful immortality;*

*mortality* ; this is true in the present Sense and Notion of Life ; Error and Ignorance are as it were a Disease or State of Insensibleness, and Death to the Understanding ; the Mind, that is utterly ignorant of Objects worthy of it , has nothing to imploy it self upon, or at least nothing that gives it any solid Satisfaction ; but the Mind, which is filled with the Knowledge of excellent things, has a great variety of Scenes to entertain it, and never wants some fresh Occasion of delight and wonder. But it will be said, Does not the Fool behold the visible World as well as the Philosopher ? He does ; but just as he reads a Poem, without discovering the Artfulness of its Contrivance, the Richness of the Fancy , or Variety of the Incidents. The Sinner hears talk too of an invisible World, of Moral Perfections hear , and of Divine Joys hereafter ; but he hears it unmoved, unaffected, which shews he has no lively Notion, no distinct Perception of any thing of this kind ; the Glass is dulled and sullied ; Beauty it self would loose all Charm, reflected thus. But Humane Perfection consists not in Knowledge alone, but also in the Purity of the Heart,

Heart, in the regulation of the Affections, in Love and true Liberty, that is, the Heart must be set upon Objects worthy of it, and we must pursue our true Good with vigour and constancy; and this is that which renders Life truly delightful and uniform; without Objects to ingage our Affections, we can scarcely be said to live, we shall be becalmed, and scarce be sensible of the breath we draw; and unless these Objects be worthy and agreeable, all is but Storm and Tempest, Cheat and Torment, and our Faculties are not rationally imployed, but abused, deluded, depraved, tortured. Could we but comprehend what all this did amount to, or at least, could we feel and experience it, we should soon discern that the Wise and Good, and they only, did truly live; for these only know God and themselves; these only admire, and love, and rejoyce, and hope rationally; and these only are not confined nor limited in their Knowledge or their Affections, for the Objects of both are infinite; their Minds can never travel so far in the Contemplation of God and the most important Truths, but that there is still a new World to be further discovered; nor can  
their



their Admiration or Love, their Joy or Hope, so enlarge themselves, as ever to equal the Objects of these Passions, and reach the utmost that is in them. But 'tis probable after all, the Fool and Sinner will pretend to engross the Goods of the Earth, as if they alone were to possess and enjoy them, as if they were the Heirs of this World, the Righteous of the other; but this is a vain fancy, and has been often baffled. Who can hasten more to enjoy, than he who knows the true value and right use of all things? And who can enjoy more in any thing, than he who at once gratifies his Reason and his Appetite, and pleases his Inclination, without forfeiting his true Liberty? If to be fooled and cheated, if to be ensnared and tormented, by the things of this World, be a Pleasure, in this the Christian must indeed give place to the Infidel, the Righteous Man to the Sinner.

The Sum then of this whole Matter is, Life in the foolish, mean, and vicious Soul, seems like a little Rill of Water, confined within narrow and scanty Bounds, or like the Light of a Candle inclosed within the narrow compass of a Dark-

Dark-Lanthorn; but in the Wise and Understanding, 'tis like a mighty Stream which swells above its Banks, and spreads it self over a vast Plain; or like Light unconfined, which diffuses and darts it self over all the Face of Nature. Ah! therefore how much does it import me, to fill my Understanding with bright and lovely Images, with pleasing and important Notions, with all the Truths that can serve, either to delight or guide, to nourish or adorn, to support or fortifie me in this World, or advance my Title to the Joys of another? How much does it import me, to fill my Soul with Love, Love of all that is Good or Great; Love of all that's Pure or Sacred; Love of all that's Beautiful or Delightful? and lastly, that my Body may be a fit Instrument of such a Mind, it does not a little import me, that this be strong and healthy, vigorous and vivacious.

Sect. 2. The second way to improve Life, is to begin to Live betimes; or at least, if our Years be far spent, to begin to Live immediately, which is all we can do. Life, in my Notion of it, dawns with our Reason, and grows up to ripeness and perfection with the Vertue, Li-

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berty, and Tranquillity of the Soul. To be Wise, and to be Religious, this is to Live, for in this consists Fruition and Enjoyment; in this the Health and Vigour of our Faculties; in this the Harmony and Beauty of the whole Frame of our Nature; and this, and no other, is a rational and agreeable Exercise of all our Powers and Capacities. Whoever therefore will improve Life, ought to begin next moment to assert his Liberty, and to give up himself to true Philosophy; 'tis strange to see how Men put off this, or attempt it only superficially, and by the by; they prefer, I will not say Trades and Husbandry, and various sorts of Knowledge, foreign and remote from the Service and Conduct of Humane Life, (ah! that Time were but so well spent in general;) but they prefer even Dressing, Painting, Drinking, Gaming, and all, not only the most silly and trifling, but the most vile and infamous ways of consuming Time, before true Wisdom and Philosophy: Nay, amongst those that make profession of Wisdom, and pretend to have dedicated themselves to the Doctrine of Jesus, 'tis common to see great numbers Hearing, Talking, Reading,

Reading, Disputing, without ever making any use of those Truths they study and contend for, or feeling any warmth or influence of them; like those wise ones in Temporals, who are laying up Provision and Treasure all their Life long, which they will never use, never enjoy. Ah wretched Consumption of Life! how soon will the last Minute expire? And the unhappy Man will not have lived one Year, one Month, one Day, but will have wasted a precious Treasure of Time, and he must go immediately and account for it. Well, let the World live after its own fashion, I plainly see the Point I am to make; no Day, no Hour shall pass me unimployed, every Moment, if I can, I will grow wiser and better; 'tis not how long I last, but how much I live; I will *Know*, I will *Act*, I will *Enjoy* to Day, and then I am sure I have lived a Day; this most propose to do, some time or other, but not to Day: And why not to Day? why not presently? is there any Evil in being immediately wise, immediately free, immediately rational, immediately happy? It cannot be, if the state I am in be really good; if the Pleasures I enjoy be really such as my Reason can share in.

and my Conscience can approve ? I then indeed live. There's no need of Change and Reformation, but Continuance and Perseverance ; but if they be not , why will I not exchange ? False for true, and irrational for rational Pleasures : If I am in the right ? if my Condition be truly good and safe, 'tis well ; there's nothing further to be done, but to maintain my Ground : But if I am in the wrong, if the Foundation be unsound and rotten, and whilst I dream not of it, my Health and Fortune, I mean my imaginary Happiness, consume inwardly, waste and decay insensibly, why am I fond of the Cheat ? why am I unwilling to be undeceived and disabused ? And why not presently ? The Reason is plain , they acknowledge the Representation I have made to them of a virtuous and Rational Life, is very pleasant and taking. but to be born into this new State, to come forth into this moral Light is as troublesome , as the Infants being born into the Natural: They love the Ease and Wealth of a prosperous Trader, but not the Hardships of his Apprentiship the Thrift and Confinement of his Beginnings. They love Lawrels and Triumphant Arches, the Glory and the Pleasure



sure of Victory , but cannot endure the Toils and Hazards of War. Or plainly thus, they admire Liberty of Mind, Serenity and Rational Joy , but it will cost them much Labour and Pains to purchase it. Thus the wretched Man, fearing the Regiment of Physick , wears out a miserable Life in the Pains of a Disease, and one that has a Cancer or Gangrene chooses to waste and rot in Pain by Piece-meal, rather than undergo the short pain of Amputation or Absition. Nay, what is worse than all this, Men are fond of their Diseases, love the things that increase and nourish them, as the gross and corpulent do rest, the Lethargic sleep, and the Hydropick drink.

This is the state , the deplorable state of the far greater part of Mankind, a state of Disease and Death, a state of Bondage and Captivity, a state of Infatuation and Enchantment ; and I very much fear , that whatever Motives can be extracted out of the Subject I am now upon, will be too weak and feeble ; for what can all the Discourses in the World about Rational Pleasure and the Satisfaction of a Regular and Vertuous Life amount to with Men wholly given up to Sensuality, and

incapable of relishing any pure and sacred Delights? If I have succeeded so far, as to possess them with an Opinion that a Life of Reason or Religion is a Life of Pleasure, tho' they have not any true gust or clear and lively Notion of this Pleasure, 'tis the utmost I can hope for; but to perswade these Men to embrace this Life, there is need of all the Arguments that either Reason or Religion can administer; and these too pointed with all the Life and Spirit, with all the Edge and Flame that Wit or Judgment can give them; a Task too hard for me! O God! thou lover of Mankind, that thou wouldest aid me by thy Spirit, while I strive to prevail with Young and Old to seek thy Glory and their own Happiness, to pursue Vertue and true Pleasure. I will first address my self to the Young, and then to those more advanced in Years.

I. To the Younger. You are now in your Bloom, what glorious Fruit may you bring forth! what Honour may you do God! what Service may you render your Relations and your Country! and what Joys and Blessings may you not heap upon your selves! Time and Tide seem to wait upon you; even the Providence

vidence and Grace of God, with Reverence be it said, seem to attend and court you. But ah ! remember , they will not do so for ever ; these Smiles and Invitations of Heaven and Nature will not last continually ; your Infidelity or Ingratitude, your Folly and Sensuality, will soon blast and wither all these fair Hopes, turn all your Pleasures into Gall and Wormwood, and all your blessed Advantages into the Instruments of your Ruine, and Aggravations of it too : Grace will soon retire , Nature degenerate, Time grow old, the World despise you, the God of it frown upon you , and Conscience, guilty Conscience will be either stupified and benumbed, or fester and rage within you , and Death will come , and then Judgment ; and how soon 'twill come, ah ! who knows ; sudden and early Deaths ought to convince you on what uncertain Ground you stand ; the Scythe of Death stays not always till the Harvest be ripe , but promiscuously mows down the Young and Old. Ah ! begin , begin then to live ; seize upon Pleasure and Happiness while they stand courting and inviting you ; pursue Vertue and Glory immediately,

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ately, while the Difficulties are fewer, your Strengths and Aids greater ; your Judgments being not yet corrupted by the Maxims, or rather the Fancies of the World, nor your Wills yet disabled and enslaved by a Custom of Sin. Ah! venture not to devote your Youth to Vanity and Folly, on presumption of devoting your Age to Repentance and Religion: For if this were a Rational and Just Design in it self, yet is it to you a very unsafe and doubtful one: For which way can you ensure Life, or on what ground can you confide on the morrow? *Boast not of to morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth, Prov. 27. 1.*

I know what Opposition will be raised against this kind of Exhortation, and with what rude Reflections they will be treated: Come, say they, *this is our Spring, let us enjoy our selves whilst we have time and vigour; Religion looks too grave and formal for these years: we shall have time enough to be dull and melancholy: Come on then, let us enjoy our selves as becomes our Youth; this is our Portion, and our Lot is this; and whatever they who have now out-liv'd themselves,*

*selves, whose Blood is sour, and Spirits low, may gravely talk against these things; they too, when time was, admired what they now would have us despise as Vanity, and committed themselves, what they now condemn in us.* In Answer to this, let us pass over the briskness and the flourish, and examine the Sense and Reason of this sort of Talk: The Substance of it may be reduced to three Heads.

1<sup>st</sup>, Youth is the Season of Pleasure, *i. e.* Sin and Folly; Inclination and Opportunity conspire to invite you to it, therefore you indulge it. What a strange Argument is this? Is there any Period of our Life, from our Cradle almost to our Coffin, I mean from the moment we arrive at the use of Reason to our Grave, wherein some Sin or other is not in season: May not Manhood defend Ambition, and old Age Covetousness, by the same Argument by which you do your sinful Pleasures? If Inclination to a folly would justify our Commission of it, in what part of Life should we begin to be Wise and Vertuous? 'Twill be hard to find the time wherein we shall have no Inclination to any Sin or Folly; or rather, if this be so, who can be Guilty?

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The Adulterer will impute his Unclean-  
ness to the impetus of his Lust; the Mur-  
derer his Bloodshed to the violence of his  
Rage, *i. e.* each of them their Sins to the  
strength of their Inclinations, and if your  
Argument be good, they will be inno-  
cent. But do not deceive your selves,  
then is your Obedience, as most accep-  
table to God, so most indispensable in it  
self, when you lie under Temptations to  
Sin, and Heaven is proposed as a Reward,  
not of following, but conquering your  
Inclinations. The second part of the  
Objection is, That Religion doth not  
look very graceful in young Years: This  
I could never well understand; if you  
be so foolish as to think Religion consists  
in four Faces, or an affected Morose-  
ness and Sullenness, or in Stupidity and  
Melancholy, I must confess you have  
little Reason to be fond of it, for this  
becomes no Age, and much less the more  
verdant one: But if by Religion you un-  
derstand Devotion towards God, Re-  
verence towards your Parents and  
Superiours, Temperance and Chastity  
in your selves, and such like Vertues; I  
must needs say, nothing can appear to  
me more great and lovely than Religion  
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in Youth ; what can better become those who possess the Gifts of Nature in their Perfection, than Gratitude to the God of Nature ? What can be a greater Glory to the Young, than Obedience to Parents, and Reverence to their Elders and Superiours ? What does more preserve, or better become Strength than Sobriety and Temperance ? What is a more charming or more lasting Ornament to Beauty than Modesty and Chastity. After all this, 'tis a vain thing to comfort your selves with saying, That the Grave and Wise, when they had the same Inclinations you now have, did as you do, indulge and gratifie them : For *first*, this is not generally true ; and *secondly*, the less they did it, the more were they honoured and beloved ; but *thirdly*, if they did, 'tis certain that they have bitterly condemned it, and repented of it : And is it not strangely absurd, that you should propose to your selves nothing in the Lives of the Wise and Vertuous but their Frailties and Errors for your Example ; that you should pitch upon that only for your Imitation , which all the Wise and Good detest and bemoan, as their Sin and Shame , and  
think

think it their highest Wisdom to do so.

To conclude this Address to the younger sort, unless there be any who are possessed with a Spirit of Infidelity, against which I will not now enter the Lists, all the Pretences you can possibly form for your differring to devote your selves instantly to Wisdom and Religion, are founded in two Suppositions, of which the one is false, and the other absurd: The false one is, That Sin is a State of Pleasure, Vertue of Trouble and Uneasiness; the contrary of which is, I think, sufficiently demonstrated through this whole Treatise, and would you but be prevailed with to taste the Pleasures of a sincere Vertue, your Experience would soon confute this Fancy; what madness then is it to be afraid of becoming happy too soon? Ah! how differently are we affected under the Maladies of the Mind and of the Body: Did the Lame or Blind, the Lepers, the Lunatics or Demoniacs, ever entreat our Lord to defer their Cure, and give them leave to enjoy their Miseries, Diseases, and Devils, a little longer. The other Supposition is absurd, which is, That you will Repent hereafter. Must you then Repent

pent hereafter? Must this be the Fruit of all your sinful Pleasures, Guilt and Remorse, Grief and Fear, Distress and Agony of Soul? Do Revelation and Reason, Death and Judgment; do all your sober and retired Thoughts preach you this one Lesson *Repentance*? and yet can you resolve to plunge your selves in that Filthiness which must be washed off with Tears? Can you resolve to indulge those cheating and deceitful Lusts which will one day fill your Soul with shame and sorrow, with distraction, horror and amazement? Ah Infatuation! ah Bewitchery! that ever a rational Creature should live in such an open defiance and hostility against his Reason! and yet, if *Repentance*, after many years, and innumerable sins, would be more easie? if your Sins would be more easily conquered, or more easily attoned? this Frensie would not want some little colour; but how contrary is this to Truth? which puts me in mind of another sort of Readers, to whom I am now to apply my self, namely,

2ly, To those who are advanced in years. 'Tis observed of *Cæsar* by *Suetonius*, that lighting upon the Statue of  
*Alexander*

*Alexander* the Great in the Temple of *Hercules* at *Gades*, and reflecting on himself, that he had yet done nothing remarkable at those years, wherein that (in *Cæsar's* Notion of Gallantry) brave and gallant Man had over-run all the *East*, he did sweat and blush under the keen Reproaches of his own Mind, and groaned under the uneasy Conscience of his Sloth, and presently desired to be dismissed from his Questorship, that he might pursue Glory and Immortality, Fame and Dominion. Had you but one spark, I will not say of the Zeal of a Christian, but of this generosity of a Pagan, you would blush at the Soul, to think that you have not yet buckled on the Armour of Light, at an Age in which many others have been covered with Lawrels; that you have not yet started forth at those years, in which some others have finished, tho' not their Race, yet all the Difficulties of it; the miserable account that you will give of thirty, forty, peradventure of fifty years! I will not say that you have lived to no purpose, but to the worst imaginable; ignorant, enslaved to Lust, oppressed by Guilt! all that you have done is,



is, *You have treasured up wrath against the day of wrath* : For this to be the product of so many years ! Shame and Confusion ! But greater , infinitely greater to go on thus. Sin may to some seem the Misfortune of Youth , but 'tis unquestionably the Reproach of Age : Unhappy Nature , and unhappy Education bear a share of the Imputation in Youth ; but in these years your own Obstinacy and Choice engross the whole Guilt. Young People are like weak Barks , which in boisterous Seas and Winds carry too much Sail , and too little Ballast ; their Judgment is weak and unresolved , and their Passions light and violent as Hurricanes ; but riper years do , or should , bring on naturally wiser and stancher thoughts , cooler , sedater tempers ; and therefore certainly Sin in these carries a deeper Guilt and shame in it : The raw unexperienced Sinner perisheth whilst he but tastes and gazes ; the Virgin Soul coming into a strange World , is deflower whilst it gratifies its Curiosity and Fancy , like *Dinah* when she went forth only to see the Daughters of the Land : But the full-grown

grown Sinner sins against, not only the Preachers Instruction, but his own Experience too; he repeats those Sins which he has often confessed to be his Folly and his Shame, and returns like foolish Mariners, to those treacherous Seas where they were Shipwrecked but the other day: If this be not to outrage Conscience, defie Reason, and dare God, what is? No, you'll say, you to do resolve to repent hereafter? Hereafter? how ill does this word sound in one who does begin to bow already under the weight of years? Hereafter? how ill does this Language become this decaying mouldring Body? But suppose the Wheels of Time would stop, thô running now down a head-long Precipes; suppose your Sun would for a while stand still, yet what a Work have you to finish! what Guilt to expiate! what Sins to vanquish! and what a *Day of Judgment* to prepare for! Are theſe flight Considerations? will your Sins, think you, be easily attoned? when their number is swoll'n, not only by length of time, but also by an uncontrouled Licentiousness! For Novice  
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in Sin is aw'd by Modesty, held in by Scruples, and discouraged by regret and remorse; but the Veteran Sinner is carried away by a Torrent of debauched Affections, and repeats his Follies with a relentless Confidence and unopposed Authority. Will it be an easie Task to subdue those Sins, which have maintained a long and undisturbed Dominion, and exercised an Absolute Sovereignty over you? What shall awaken that Sinner, who, like *Solomon's Drunkard*, *Prov. 23. 35.* is insensible of Stripes and Wounds; and alas! when roused out of the Arms of his *Dalilah*, his Locks, like *Sampson's*, are cut off, the Spirits retired, his Strength impaired, and the Force of his Enemy Augmented; and with what will he Conquer? Is it, lastly, a trivial thing to appear before the Judgment Seat of God, that you should think a Moment will serve turn to prepare for it. I will suppose the Judge of the whole World as merciful as you can desire him, if you will suppose him too, with Reverence be it spoke, to have so much Sense as not to be imposed on,

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so much Integrity as to expect Sincerity, tho' not Perfection; and this alone will make that *Judgment* formidable. I very much fear that both Young and Old do entertain too mild and favourable a Notion of that Day, and so elude and baffle the Force of the most powerful Motive to Vertue and Religion the Gospel has; I shall not therefore wander far from the purpose of this Paragraph, if I close this Exhortation *to begin to live immediately*, with a short Reflection on that Day.

We must first bid adieu to this World, to every thing in it that's dear to us, and dye ere we can go and appear before God, what a perfect Mortification of all our Sensual Appetites is necessary, ere we can calmly part with all here below! what a long Experience of Love and Duty is necessary to confirm and assure the Soul against all its Fears and Apprehensions! what a vigorous Faith to carry us through this dark Passage into another World! when we are got there, what a strict Trial are we to undergo! There all Disguises will be taken

taken off, and every thing appear in its naked Nature: There all our Superstructures of Hay and Stubble will be burnt up, only pure solid Vertue will bear the Test: There darling Vices will not pass under the Disguise of Sins of Infirmary: There an honest Sloth and harmless Luxury, will not be thought Innocence enough to entitle Men to Heaven: There some few good fits will not pass for godly Sorrow, nor some feeble and short-liv'd Attempts for Repentance and a Change: There the Effects of a lucky Constitution, will not be crowned as the Works of Grace, and Fruits of the Divine Life: There, in a word, talk will not pass for Action, nor Censure of others, commute for Mortification in our selves: Finally, nothing shall be rewarded there but a conquering Faith, an active Charity, an humble, constant Zeal, patient persevering Hopes, spiritual Joys, and pious Fears. This needs no Application; Begin, begin to live before you dye, begin to repent and reform before you be judged.



Sect. 3. A third way of *Improving Life* is to avoid and cut off all those things that are injurious to it: Such are Sloth that waists, and Impertinence that embroils it: Coldness or Remissness in Religion that dispirits and dilutes, Levity and Inconstancy that disorder and confound it: And finally, all those Evils that sour and imbitter it. I am sensible that these Heads occur often, and tho' it be under different Aspects, yet 'tis possible that I may sometimes light upon the same Thoughts, nay, peradventure the very same words, 'tis against my will if I do; but I want fight to revise my Papers, and am glad to disburden my Memory as fast as I can, and therefore charge it with nothing that I have once entrusted to writing; and the toil of recollecting my Thoughts, scattered up and down like *Sybil's* Oracles in dispersed Leaves, by a hand which 'tis impossible for me to direct or animate, is most intollerable; if therefore I slip into any Error of this kind, which I shall very unwillingly,  
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I cannot but presume of Pardon, having so just an Excuse. But I proceed,

*First*, We must avoid Idleness. Sloth is the Rust of Time; Sleep is an Image of Death, and Sloth of Sleep: The Life of the sluggish is but a waking Dream, a Vacation from all Business and true Enjoyment too; a Cessation and Stop, tho' not of Time, which still runs on, yet of the very Powers and Faculties of the Soul, whereas Life consists in the Exercise of both: How remote then must Idleness be from improving or exalting Life? it never ploughs nor sows, and therefore never reaps; it never plants nor scts, and therefore never gathers any Fruit; nothing great was ever performed by it, nothing great ever enjoyed by it: And shall the richest Fruit that ever grew upon any of the Trees of Paradise, Wisdom, and Vertue, *i. e.* Knowledge and Life be gathered by a sluggish hand? No, tho' no Angel or flaming Sword do stop his way, yet are there Difficulties in it, too many and too great for this heavy

daftardly Animal to conquer. *Plato*, as I remember, tells us ſome where, that a God tied Pain and Pleaſure by the Tails together; there is no coming at the one by him who ſhuns the other: So is the World contrived, that even Temporal and ſeeming Goods cannot be obtained without the travel of the Mind, and toil of the Body; and yet what lean, ſtarved, and beggarly Bleſſings are theſe, compared to thoſe I treat of. The rich Man may ſtarve for want of true Pleaſure in the miſt of his glittering Heaps: Sorrow may fit heavy on the Heart of the Conquerour; or the Bride, even on the days of ſolemn Triumph and Feſtival noiſe: The Prince may be a Slave, an Egyptian Slave, even while he reigns with abſolute and uncontrouled Power: But Life and Pleaſure, Content and Happineſs, are the inſeparable Companions of Wiſdom and Vertue: Let no man therefore flatter himſelf with the Hopes of ſuch a Treafure, who lives idly and at his eaſe; he muſt pray, meditate, watch, and exerciſe himſelf in Industry, Sobriety, and

and Purity, who will overcome the Corruptions of his Nature, and obtain the Tranquility and Liberty of a true Christian. Nor let this frighten any Man, for those Duties which are a little troublesome in the beginning, do soon grow easie and delightful too. In this sense must we understand that of the Author of *Ecclesiasticus*, Chap. 4. 17, 18. thô rendered a little harshly : *For at the first she* (that is, Wisdom) *will walk with him by crooked ways, and bring fear and dread upon him, and torment him with her Discipline until she may trust his Soul, and try him by her Laws. Then will she return the straight-way unto him, and comfort him, and shew him her secrets.*

*Secondly*, Impertinence, or beingbusied and imployed in Trifles, is indeed as different from Sloth as Motion from Rest; but yet such a wretched Consumption of Time cannot deserve the Name of Life; for this is not Activity of Soul, but a poor and mean debasing of it: Fancy, and that a silly and extravigant one, may be said to

live, but Reason cannot. That Idleness, which consists in heavy Passive Dulness, is like a state of Sleep without Dream or Fancy; that which consists in a fluttering and impertinent Activity, is nothing else but a giddy Ferment of the Spirits, and Agitation of the Fancy, the incoherent disjoyned Thoughts, the confused and fruitless Projects and Attempts of a Dream, and we may almost as properly say of him that Dreams, that he Eats and Drinks, Fights or Travels, or whatever he Fancies himself to do, as we can of this sort of Sluggard that he lives. 'Tis true, could a Man be for ever Impertinent, this sort of Idleness would seem to some Men to have no great Evil in it; but how could such a Mind bear the shock of Humane Misfortunes? How could such a Soul discharge the great Duties of Humane Society? How could it entertain it self with Objects agreeable to a Rational Nature? And if it could do none of these things, 'tis impossible to conceive how it could be other than miserable; for tho' we could suppose  
such



such a Creature to be so meer a Trifle as never to be nearly concerned in any Changes of Fortune, nor ever called upon by that Community he belongs to, that is, I should almost say, never to be regarded or minded, either by God or Man; yet still such a one did no way live up to the Excellence of his Nature, his Business and Enjoyment were not Manly and Rational, and his Childish Life were therefore only pretty and pleasing to him, because he had a childish and silly Soul.

Nor is the Grave much better than the gay *Impertinent*; or the Man of Business, if he neglect the main, the one thing necessary, to be preferred before the Man of Mode: Sensuality, 'tis true, softens, and Drudgery hardens the Mind, but both alike intoxicate it, both wed it to this, and alienate it from the other World: It imports very little to what Idol one do Sacrifice, whether *Ashtaroth*, *Molock*, or *Mammon*, if we Sacrifice not to the true God. In vain do they pretend to any other Art, who are ignorant  
of

of the Art of Living, to plod or drudge, intrigue or trade, canvas and court, 'tis all but solemn Impertinence, if Vertue and Religion be neglected: Ah! what Phantoms, and Clouds, and Dreams do Men pursue and hunt after, instead of Life and Peace, of Rest and Pleasure!

*Thirdly*, Remissness or Lukewarmness in Religion, a sort of Neutrality between Vice and Vertue is the next thing to be avoided: We can never truly Live, unless we be intirely Uniform, unless we be wholly given up, and without reserve, to the Conduct of Reason: There is little Pleasure in Religion, if there be no ardour and fervency in it; 'tis Love makes the Duty easie, and the Prospect delightful. If there be no Strength in Faith, no Life in Devotion, no Spirit in Duty, no Desire in Hope, this is Religion without a Soul, 'tis the Carcas of an unanimated Vertue; what Peace? what Assurance? what Joy? what Transport can ever be the Portion of such a Christian?

*Fourthly*

*Fourthly*, Levity and Inconstancy is the last thing I will now mention, and the most irreconcilable Enemy to *Life*. For this does not only interrupt the Course of *Life*, or like Sleep or Sloth, make a vast Calm or Gap in it, but puts us more back than we had advanced forward; an unhappy gust of Wind that throws us off to Sea again, when we were almost come to Shore; if we will reap the Fruit of Victory, we must pursue it; if we will find rest, we must be stedfast and unmoveable; if we will enjoy Vertue, we must unite and incorporate it with us; 'tis impossible that the unconstant, unstable Profelyte of Vertue should either have a pleasant Life, or a comfortable Death; for if he build to day what he pulled down yesterday, if he practice one hour what he condemns another, 'tis impossible he should please himself, much less his God.

To shun the Evils, and make the most of the Goods of Life, is none of the least important Rules conducing to Happiness, and might properly enough be insisted on here. But I begin

gin to tire ; and since this may better be reduced under the Heads of *Indolence* and *Fruition*, I will defer the Consideration of it till I come to treat of them, which I may one time or other do, if I see Reason for it, if not, I would not willingly be impertinent ; if I cannot *serve* the *World*, I will not trouble it.

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F I N I S.

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ERRATA.

PAGE 13. line 12. read *contemptible*. p. 68. l. 21. r. *single*.  
p. 90. l. 6. r. *ease*. p. 134. l. 12. r. *ripen*. p. 134. l. 15.  
r. *places*.

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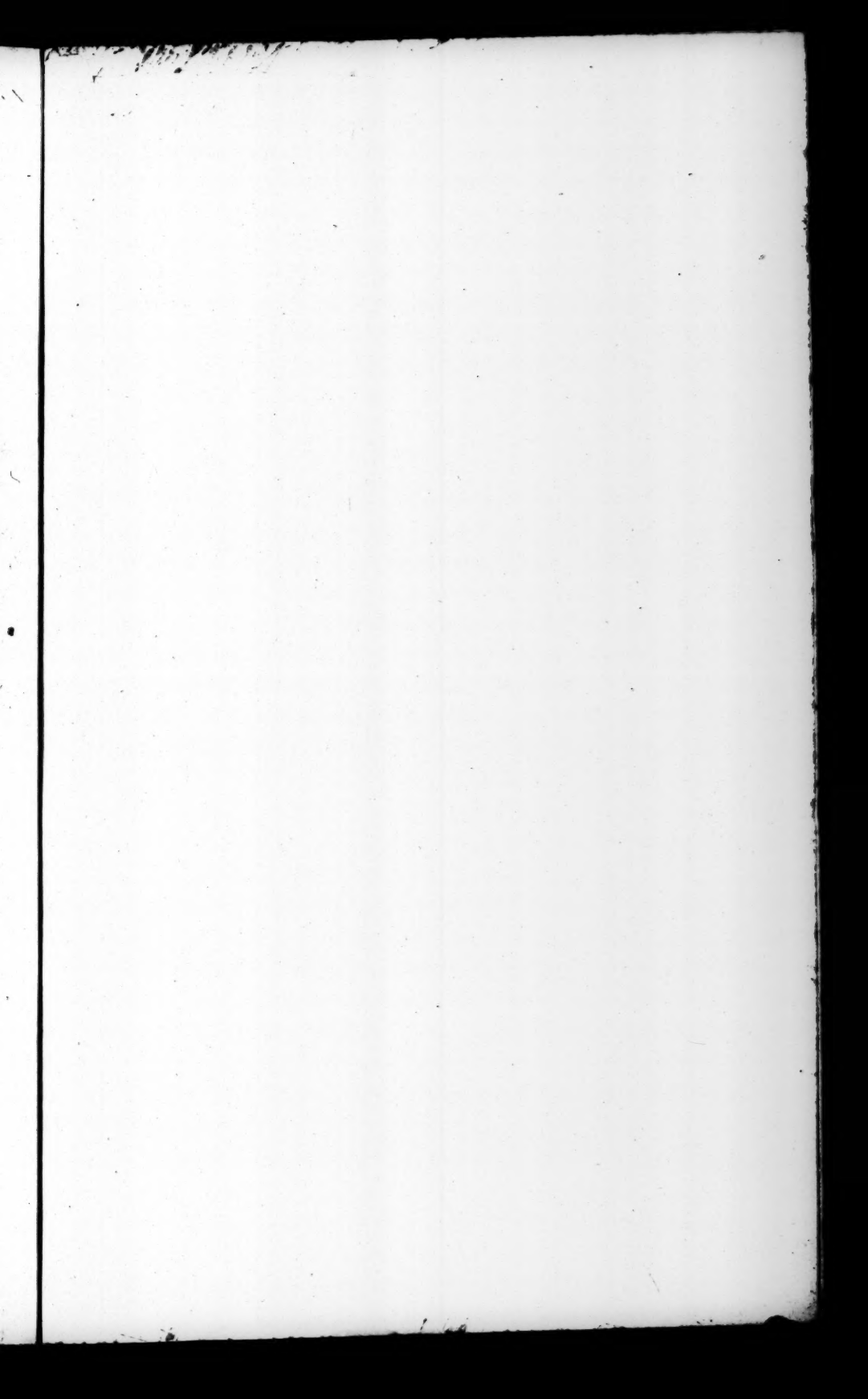
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